

Wednesday, March 24, 1999  
Applicant feels like a number

**Happy 'Eid Al Adha**

THE JORDAN TIMES will not be published Saturday, March 27, and Sunday, March 28, in observance of the 'Eid Al Adha holiday. The next issue of the paper will appear on Monday, March 29. The Editor and staff of the Jordan Times wish their readers and advertisers a very happy 'Eid.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Volume 24 Number 7104 AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 25-26, 1999, DHUL HIJJA 8-9, 1419 Price: Jordan 200 Fils

## NATO launches air strikes against Yugoslavia

### Yugoslavia declares state of war; Yeltsin suspends Russian cooperation with NATO

**Agencies**

**YUGOSLAVIA DECLARED** a state of war on Wednesday as waves of NATO warplanes pounded Yugoslav military targets at the start of a campaign to force Belgrade to accept an international peace plan for Kosovo.

The Yugoslav army said an unspecified number of women and children had been killed in military housing and that seven towns had been hit in a barrage of cruise missiles.

NATO denied a statement by one of its officials in Italy that an alliance plane had been shot down in the attack, the first on Yugoslavia since World War II. Serbian television said three missiles had also been brought down.

The official Yugoslav news agency Tanjug carried the declaration of war in a five-word report which did not specify who had made the declaration or what effect it had.

Two Boeing B-2 "Stealth" bombers flew from the United States to take part in the raids, the first combat use of the \$2.1 billion jets developed during the Cold War to deliver nuclear bombs to the heart of the Soviet Union.

In Berlin, British officials at a European Union summit said eight of the 19 NATO member



A U.S. B-52 leaves RAF Fairford base, southwestern England, on Wednesday. A squadron of eight B-52 bombers took off on Wednesday from this air force base, said the Ministry of Defence (AFP photo)

nations took part in the open wave of attacks — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States.

Powerful explosions lit up the night sky near Belgrade, the Kosovo provincial capital Pristina, the northern Serbian town of Novi Sad and two cities in Serbia's sister republic of Montenegro, witnesses and local media said.

A "deeply shocked" President Boris Yeltsin suspended Russian cooperation with NATO and called an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council. Russia is a traditional friend of fellow Orthodox nation Serbia.

"In Russia there is deep shock at the military actions of NATO against sovereign Yugoslavia, which is nothing other than naked aggression," he said.

He said that if the conflict spread, Russia reserved the right to take measures "including those of a military character" to defend itself and the security of Europe.

Yeltsin, who had earlier made a last-minute appeal to NATO to call off the attacks, recalled Russia's representative at NATO headquarters in Brussels and halted cooperation with the alliance under the Partnership for Peace Pro-

gramme, designed to forge closer ties between former Cold War foes.

Yeltsin also suspended talks on opening a NATO military mission in Moscow, saying the alliance was trying to assume a "world policeman" role which Moscow found totally unacceptable.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin told NTV television Yeltsin would meet senior officials on the crisis on Thursday. A security official in the ex-Soviet republic of Belarus, which borders new NATO member Poland, said Minsk might once more allow Russian nuclear weapons onto its territory as a response.

"Such a variant is not excluded," the deputy head of the security council, Viktor Novitsky, told state television.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan backed Wednesday's air strikes, but lamented that the U.N. Security Council was not consulted.

"It is indeed tragic that diplomacy has failed. But there are times when the use of force may be legitimate in the pursuit of peace," Annan said.

The European Commission's president-designate, former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, called for a new Kosovo peace conference once the bombing is over.

"After the military action in progress a peace conference becomes indispensable to completely re-draft the political situation in the Balkan region," Prodi told reporters.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin called for an immediate end to the bombing.

U.S. President Bill Clinton said the strikes, the first attack on a sovereign nation in NATO's 50-year history, aimed to prevent "brutal repression" by Yugoslav forces against the ethnic Albanian majority in Serbia's Kosovo province.

"Only firmness now can prevent greater catastrophe later," Clinton said from the White House shortly after the bombing began. "Kosovo's crisis is now full-blown and if we do not act clearly it will get even worse."

Following a year of fighting in Kosovo between Belgrade's troops and ethnic Albanian guerrillas, NATO resorted to force after Milosevic on Monday turned down a last-ditch bid by U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke to win him over to the peace plan.

"Clear responsibility for the air strikes lies with President Milosevic who has refused to stop his violent action in Kosovo and has refused to negotiate in good faith," NATO Secretary General Javier Solana said.

Enormous explosions rocked the region around Pristina at about 8 p.m. (1900 GMT), interrupting a dead calm on the deserted streets and sending up great red flashes, witnesses said. The city of 200,000 then plunged into darkness. There was a further massive blast about 90 minutes later.

In Belgrade, an explosion was seen near the big military base and airport of Batujnica, the largest military installation near the Yugoslav capital.

(Continued on page 7)

## Hundreds of prisoners released under amnesty

**By Tareq Ayyoub**

**JWEIDEH PRISON** — Hundreds of prisoners, mostly convicted of drug charges, draft-dodging, manslaughter, shoplifting and other misdemeanours, were freed from institutions around the country on Wednesday under a controversial decree issued by His Majesty King Abdullah.

The decree also exempted those whose crimes are punishable by fines from paying any fees. Critics of this particular exemption say it will increase the budget deficit of the government and the Greater Amman Municipality.

Prosecutor General Mohammad Hawamdeh, who supervised the release of some of detainees from Jweideh Prison, said the release will continue until Thursday, ahead of the 'Eid Al Adha.

"The release will include convicted prisoners and detainees in all correctional and rehabilitation centres in the country, and I expect it will be over by Thursday,"

Hawamdeh told reporters.

"It is difficult to give an exact figure now of how many people will be released because we have to be certain of who is eligible for the release," the public prosecutor added.

Judge Hayel Majali, who supervised Wednesday's release at Jweideh Prison, said that between 2,500 and 3,000 prisoners and detainees are expected to be discharged from different facilities around the Kingdom by Thursday.

At least 80 persons, including four women, were set free from Jweideh Prison, 20 kilometres south of Amman on Wednesday afternoon. More than 45 detainees, who were punished for dodging military service, were released from the military jail.

Hamzeh Ahmad, 32, who was being tried for drug addiction, said that he was happy to be set free and said he hopes that he will not return to jail again.

Another detainee, Samih Hamid, 27, who was jailed for disorderly conduct, said he and

## Rawabdeh meets with associations council

**AMMAN (J.T.)** — The council of presidents of the professional associations met with Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh on Wednesday to present their requests and enquire about the new government's stand on national and professional issues.

During a meeting at the Professional Associations Complex, the council members demanded among other things the unification of laws pertaining to the unions, implementation of various agreements, mainly the prevention of dual taxation, and modernisation of laws and regulations.

Rawabdeh expressed his appreciation and support for the professional associations in their ongoing efforts to serve the nation.

The prime minister called on the council members to take part in formulating laws and solving national problems.

He also said his government is determined to make decisions needed to deal with current issues and stressed the need for modernising the administrative system in line with economic reform.

The premier said Jordan is currently passing through a new phase and aims to realise a qualitative achievement, which he said can only be attained through dialogue between the government and all concerned sectors.

Rawabdeh said the rule of law will prevail in all fields because it is a firm and established principle.

Following the meeting, Rawabdeh told the press that the government respects and supports the professional associations and is ready for cooperation as it considers them partners in shouldering responsibility.

"The government is open to discussing all issues concerning the unions and hopes that they will give advice to the government and help it carry out its duties," Rawabdeh said.

(Continued on page 7)

## Britain's top court upholds Pinochet arrest, reduces number of charges

**LONDON (R)** — Britain's top court ruled on Wednesday that the arrest here of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet was lawful, but the seven Law Lords drastically cut the number of human rights abuses that could be considered in an extradition hearing to Spain.

The 6-1 ruling by Britain's most senior judges gave both opponents and supporters of Pinochet reason to cheer in the latest development in a bitter five-month-old legal battle over his bloody 1973-1990 rule.

The Law Lords said Pinochet could not evade prosecution simply because he had been a head of state but also ruled he was answerable only for charges of murder and torture after 1988.

Britain incorporated the United Nations Convention on Torture into its law in that year. Previously no one could be tried in a British court for tor-

ture unless the offence had taken place on British territory.

For Pinochet's critics, the decision that he must stay in Britain and face extradition proceedings to Spain was "good enough," said Reed Brody, of New York-based Human Rights Watch.

"We won on the immunity issue, and on the issue that extradition proceedings, in principle, should go ahead," said Brody.

Pinochet, 83, arrested last October at the request of Spain during a visit to Britain, will stay under house arrest pending the start of extradition proceedings.

But his supporters said the ruling meant most of the charges against him had effectively been thrown out.

"The result of this decision is to eliminate the majority of the charges levelled against Senator Pinochet by the government of Spain and relied upon as the basis for extraditing him," said Lord Browne-Wilkinson, senior Law Lord, who entered the sole dissenting judgment from the majority decision.

Pinochet's lawyers immediately sought to take advantage of the ruling, heading back to a lower court to challenge last year's decision by Home Secretary Jack Straw that the general should face extradition proceedings.

The Law Lords had indicated that Straw should look again at his decision, given their ruling that most charges originally made against Pinochet should be dropped.

"There will be really hard-fought extradition proceedings. I think the longest case [in British history] is something in the region of eight or nine years and we could see that here," said Jeremy Carver of international law firm Clifford Chance.

The decision was announced



A young girl, holding a sign saying 'Now he will pay, PAGARA', celebrates Wednesday with anti-Pinochet demonstrators outside the Houses of Parliament following the Law Lords ruling (Reuters photo)

## U.S. disputes Israeli charge PNA harbouring killers of Americans

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP)** — U.S. officials disputed on Wednesday Israeli claims that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is harbouring militants involved in the killing of Americans and said such allegations were themselves hampering the fight against terrorism.

A statement issued by the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv contested charges made in a press release from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office on Tuesday that seven Islamic militants who prepared terror attacks that killed Americans were roaming free in areas under Palestinian rule.

"In the case of two of the individuals listed [by Israel] as free, U.S. officials visited Palestinian prisons in early March and verified that these individuals were in fact in custody at the time," the statement

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued on page 7)



## British Airways launches daily flights on Amman-London route

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — British Airways will next Sunday launch daily flights from Amman to London, Daniel Ennor, BA manager in Jordan, said on Wednesday.

"The daily service will combine increased flexibility as well as the British Airways award winning Business Club World," he said.

British Airways passengers will be able to travel almost anywhere in the world using the same airline without having to obtain a transit visa.

"All our flights now will give our customers the

opportunity to connect to almost anywhere in the world, everyday, on the same day," he said.

British Airways has been operating in the Middle East for 70 years and flies to 29 countries in the region.

"Over the last couple of years, Jordan has taken an increasingly important role in British Airways network. We have seen consistent growth in traffic to Jordan, and as such we increased the number of flights to seven a week."

BA will operate the Air Bus 320, which can transport up to 120 passengers. It includes 22 full business

class seats, in BA club world.

According to Ennor, BA is the only European carrier which operates in the market with a full business class.

"[Daily flights] give passengers the flexibility they need. They can wake up in the morning and decide to go to the airport and travel," he said.

BA employs around 30 people in its Amman office.

A major factor for increasing the number of flights to Jordan is the increasing number of multinational companies based in the country.

The country's stability was another decisive factor in offering the daily flight to London's Heathrow, he told the Jordan Times.

"The Jordanian market has potential and we feel there is a lot for us to do here," he said.

There will be three direct flights to London and four flights via Damascus.

"The Amman-London flight is an important one for BA. We spent a lot of time looking for mechanisms to improve service on this route. We also are doing our best to minimise waiting lists, which led us to the daily flight decision," he said.

## Virtue defy army over law

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Islamist party defied the powerful armed forces and secularist judiciary on Wednesday, calling for changes to sedition laws under which leading Islamists have been convicted.

The Islam-based Virtue Party is tipped to do well at polls in April but is facing a possible ban for allegedly trying to set up an Islamic state in violation of the constitution.

"The elections will be held, and anti-democratic laws will be altered," Virtue leader Recai Kutan told a news conference.

At the same time, three senior generals were paying a visit to chief prosecutor Vural Savas, a hard-line secularist who is weighing whether to apply to the constitutional court to outlaw Virtue.

Conflict between Islamists and the secularist establishment led by the military has plagued Turkish politics for years and added to the weakness of a series of coalition governments.

Savas rejected any alteration of clause 312 of the penal code. The item outlaws incitement to violence and is commonly used to prosecute Islamist and Kurdish activists.

"It would be wrong to change or repeal 312," Anatolian news agency quoted Savas as saying after meeting the generals.

Savas and General Hilmi Ozkok both denied the top brass visit was a gesture of support for the prosecutor.

In Turkey, however, press and politicians alike scrutinise every act of senior officers and few will believe the general's comment that he was paying a mere "courtesy call."

Armed Forces Chief Huseyin Kivrikoglu warned last week against any attempt to repeal incitement laws.

Savas was a prime force behind the outlawing of Virtue's predecessor, Welfare, closed in 1998.



KING HUSSEIN EULOGY: The late King Hussein was eulogised by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) during a special ceremony during which the association's director and several students delivered speeches expressing grief at the loss of the late Monarch and outlining his achievements for the Kingdom.

## Israeli-Egyptian peace, cold but durable

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — More than 3,000 years after Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, computer executive Yoram Hacker is leading his flock to an Egyptian Red Sea resort in a Passover holiday exodus from Israel.

Israel's peace with Egypt, sealed in a treaty 20 years ago this Friday, may be a cold peace but for 42-year-old Hacker and his family, the beaches of the Sinai peninsula are warm and inviting.

"I served with the paratroops in the Sinai for many months...I want to show my history to my children," he said before heading south this week. Israel and Egypt fought four wars before Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed the first peace treaty between the Jewish state and an Arab country at the White House on March 26, 1979.

The previous year, sequestered by U.S. President Jimmy Carter at the Camp David presidential retreat, they hammered out a series of accords that led to the formal treaty that ended Israel's isolation in the Middle East.

By late 1981, Sadat was dead — assassinated by Islamists during a parade marking the October 6, 1973 Egyptian army crossing of the Suez canal, a stunning defeat for the Israeli army that broke psychological barriers and paved the way towards eventual peace.

Under the peace deal, described as "the dawn of a new era" by one of its architects, current Israeli President Ezer Weizman, Israel in April 1982 completed a withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula which it occupied in the 1967 Middle East war. But after its June 1982 invasion of Lebanon, a cloud began to cover relations with Egypt. It has yet to lift.

Palestinian issue clouds Israeli-Egyptian relations in the lobby of Jerusalem's King

David Hotel, where Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon had just briefed foreign ambassadors, the doyen of the diplomatic corps in Israel has a quick and ready answer when asked about the "cold peace."

"When the late President Sadat came to Jerusalem [in 1977] and he spoke before the Knesset, he was very clear," said Egyptian Ambassador Mohamed Bassiouny. "He said that I am not coming here to achieve partial or separate peace."

Sadat, the ambassador said, put Israel on notice that the Palestinian issue was at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It "is a normal peace, not a cold peace," Bassiouny told Reuters. "But if Israel will solve the Palestinian problem, I am sure that the peace will be warm, not only with Egypt but with all the Arab countries." Egypt's relations with Israel have chilled considerably since right-winger Benjamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister in 1996 and over his suspension last December of a U.S.-brokered land for security deal with the Palestinians. They also have been strained by President Hosni Mubarak's rejection of Netanyahu's appeals to release Azzam Azzam, an Israeli Druze sentenced by an Egyptian security court in 1997 to 15 years' hard labour on charges of spying for Israel.

The 20th anniversary of the peace treaty was marked in Israel in a low-key ceremony in the "forest of international co-operation" outside Jerusalem.

Egypt sent its under secretary of state for afforestation.

Commercial ties expanding despite cool relations when it comes to holiday time. Israel's cool relations with Egypt do little to dampen Israelis' enthusiasm for a relatively cheap, sun-filled vacation across the border.

Some 377,000 Israelis visited Egypt last year, many of them taking their holiday in Sinai along the Red sea coast. Only

about 9,000 Egyptians came to Israel in 1998, a disparity that stems from spending power as well as government red tape.

The Israeli-Egyptian Chamber of Industry and Trade said last month that about 20 Israeli companies do business in Egypt and estimated they had invested some \$30 million last year in joint ventures in textiles, agricultural products, medical equipment, refrigeration and air conditioning and plastics. Israeli exports to Egypt reached just \$55 million in 1998, a 3.7 per cent drop from 1997. Egyptian exports to Israel plunged 40 per cent to \$18 million, the chamber said. Albert Papasahado, the chamber's president, predicted that two-way trade could reach \$150 million a year if the two countries signed an accord to sell Egyptian natural gas to Israel and diplomatic relations improved.

Israel reaps Egyptian peace dividend the peace dividend with Egypt, Israeli leaders say, should not be measured only in terms of bilateral relations.

"Without the peace with Egypt, nothing would have been achieved with Jordan and the Palestinians — and that's a fact," Weizman, defence minister 20 years ago, told a recent Israeli-Egyptian peace symposium at President's House in Jerusalem.

"If there is a bit of a cold peace — and I think it's not as warm as it should be, I'm not beating about the bush — it's because the Palestinian problem is not being solved yet." "I hope that the spirit of Camp David and the spirit of the seventies will prevail and that we will go forward...to solve the future problems," Weizman said those who seek peace in the Middle East should not despair as "whoever is elected (Israel's) prime minister in two months' time will have absolutely no alternative but to carry on the peace process."

## Ministry shelves plan to develop Tawjihi

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — Minister of Education Izzat Jaradat has shelved the idea of developing the state's high school general certificate exam, known as the Tawjihi, said an official at Ministry of Education on Wednesday.

"New Minister of Education Izzat Jaradat has stopped dealing with the former education minister's educational development plans in the ministry," the official told the Jordan Times.

Former Education Minister Fawzi Charaibeh proposed redeveloping the structure and contents of Tawjihi exam.

The two-phase plan to redevelop the Tawjihi included a one-year transitional period which was to begin this year, where students would sit the exam during two separate semesters, and the following year, students would begin taking the exam over a two-year period in three academic semesters.

"This idea has been shelved,"

said the official.

The two academic streams — scientific and literary — were to be unified for the 11th and 12th grades. The plan also proposed supplying schools with computers along with Internet service for the eighth, ninth and tenth grades.

The former minister's plans also proposed that English be taught to second and third grades students in government schools, while French would become an optional second language in secondary classes.

Another plan was to change the numerical grading system to a letter grading system rather than percentages.

Charaibeh also considered assigning a national examination centre the responsibility of preparing school tests and university entrance exams. The centre was to be technically, administratively and financially independent and was to replace the ministry's General Examination Directorate.

Director of general education, Mahmoud Massad, said

the ministry is still working on plans to introduce a new hierarchy for public teachers, and to give them professional titles that reflect their actual position and responsibilities. It is also studying plans to renew scholastic books in form and content.

In the past, the ministry formed committees to draft accredited school books and submit them for use at state-run schools. Under the new plan, the ministry will have one accredited curriculum for elementary, preparatory and secondary classes, but various publishing houses will be invited to draft texts that would be selected by the ministry.

Officials said such a competition would encourage authors to be innovative, and in turn, would reflect on the quality of education.

Massad said the new curriculum will focus on modern academic and scientific changes that Jordan will need in order for it to cope with challenges posed by the third millennium.

The other plan the ministry working on now is the new classification system for teachers that will promote them to improve their standards in order to be promoted.

The system, to be implemented in the near future, will give four professional ranks for teachers: an assistant teacher, a teacher, first degree teacher and a specialised teacher. Currently, all teachers have one title regardless of working experience or educational background.

Under the planned system, those holding less than university graduate degrees will be given an assistant teacher rank, while those to win the teacher rank will need a bachelor degree.

The first degree title will be given to teachers with five to six years of experience and who hold a Masters degree, he added.

The specialised title will be granted to teachers who have a 15-year teaching experience and hold a PhD.

## King's visit to Syria marks beginning of strong ties — Tlass

AMMAN (J.T.) — Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass was quoted as saying his country stands by Jordan and that Damascus seeks to reestablish Arab solidarity so Arabs can achieve their national aspirations.

In an interview with the local daily Al Dustour, the Syrian minister praised His Majesty King Abdullah, saying he was delighted to see the King succeeding to the Throne after his military training that will help him assume the command of the Armed Forces.

Referring to Jordanian-Syrian relations, Tlass said: "Long

journeys start with one step, and the King's planned visit to Damascus marks the beginning of the road towards strong bilateral relations, especially as the visit follows Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad's historic trip to Amman to attend the funeral of the late King Hussein last month. We look forward to a solid relationship."

Tlass's remarks were a complete turnaround of his statements last October when he criticised Jordan with remarks critical of the bedouin tribes and accusing Jordan of letting down Syria during its 1973 war with Israel and of preventing

the Saudi army from crossing into the Kingdom to assist in the fight against Israel on the Golan Heights.

In those remarks, Tlass also said Jordan would become the alternative Palestinian homeland and had become part of the Turkish-Israeli strategic alliance. The accusations drew angry reactions from the tribes, the government and people of Jordan. Some parliamentarians called on the government to respond in kind to the accusations.

In his remarks to Al Dustour, Tlass said he respected the Jordanian tribes whose roots extend into Syria.

"I would like to refer to the statements I made last October and stress that regrettably they were distorted and taken out of context," he said.

Tlass added that "I take pride in my affiliation to the Na'iem clan whose members live both in Jordan and Syria. In fact all the Jordanian clans and tribes have true Arab affiliation and could not normalise relations with Israel."

Referring to prospects of future coordination between the countries surrounding Israel, Tlass said, "This is a national duty and we look forward to coordination."

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

#### PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes  
19:00 ..... Le Journal  
19:15 ..... Betes Pas Betes  
19:30 ..... News Headlines  
19:33 ..... Payasages  
20:00 ..... World of Museum  
20:30 Dr. Quin, the Medicine Women  
21:15 ..... Encounter  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:30 ..... Feature film: Crimes of Fashion — "Sleep Walker"

#### Friday Programmes

19:00 ..... Le Journal  
19:15 Great Moments in Science and Technology  
19:30 ..... News headlines  
19:33 ..... Serie — Le Paria  
20:30 ..... Star Trek  
21:15 ..... BBC Single Documentary  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:30 ..... Millennium

#### PRAYER TIMES

04:12 ..... Fajr  
05:30 ..... (Sunrise) Duha  
11:42 ..... Dhuhur  
15:11 ..... Asr  
17:54 ..... Maghreb  
19:11 ..... 'Isha

#### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifheh, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4634590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Atram Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751  
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897  
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932  
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440  
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138  
Church of Presentation, Sweifheh Tel. 5920146  
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757  
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190  
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679  
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052  
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331  
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

#### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

#### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:  
Dr. Ahmad Manna ..... 5359413  
Dr. Khalil Jhal ..... 478450  
Dr. Walid Al Masri ..... 5675485  
Dr. Mahmoud Amir ..... 4888883

#### IRBID:

Dr. Issam Al Salih ..... 021246858

southerly active, and seas rough.  
Amman ..... 07/16  
Aqaba ..... 12/23  
Deserts ..... 05/18  
Jordan Valley ..... 11/22  
Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 18, Aqaba 25.  
Humidity readings: Amman 24 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.  
Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:  
Ajloun ..... 05/12  
Jerash ..... 06/16  
Um Qays ..... 06/17  
Madaba ..... 06/16  
Petra ..... 06/16  
Dead Sea ..... 11/23

#### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:  
Dr. Ahmad Manna ..... 5359413  
Dr. Khalil Jhal ..... 478450  
Dr. Walid Al Masri ..... 5675485  
Dr. Mahmoud Amir ..... 4888883

#### IRBID:

Dr. Issam Al Salih ..... 021246858

Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)75360  
ZARQA:  
Dr. Walid Halaseh ..... (05)982799  
Palestine Pharmacy ..... (05)983562  
EMERGENCIES  
Food Control Centre ..... 4637111  
Civil Defence Department ..... 5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 4630341  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199  
Rescue Police 192 ..... 4621111, 4637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 4617101  
Blood Bank ..... 4775121  
Highway Police ..... 5343402  
Traffic office ..... 4896390  
Public Security Dept. ..... 4630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 5605800  
Price Complaints ..... 5661176  
Water & Sewage Complaints ..... 4897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 4787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 0132  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 4623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs ..... 5661101  
Jordan Television ..... 4773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 4774111  
Water Authority ..... 5680100  
J. Electricity Authority ..... 5815615  
Electric Power Co. .... 4636381  
RJ Flight Information 44-53200  
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport ..... 44-53200

#### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..... 5921199  
The Islamic, Abdli ..... 5666131/7

#### IRBID:

Dr. Issam Al Salih ..... 021246858

Hussein Medical Centre ..... 5856856  
Luzville ..... 4630196  
Khaldi Maternity ..... 4644281/6  
Akileh Maternity ..... 4642441/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity ..... 4642362  
Malhas, J. Amman ..... 4636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani ..... 5607071  
Shmeisani Hospital ..... 5607431  
Jordan Hospital ..... 5607550  
University Hospital ..... 5353444  
Al-Muasher Hospital ..... 5667279  
Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 5664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen ..... 4777101/3  
Al-Bashir ..... 4775111/26  
Army, Marka ..... 4891611/5  
Queen Alia Hospital ..... 5157100  
Arenal Hospital ..... 5607155  
Al Amal Cancer Centre ..... 5353000  
Jerusalem Hospital ..... 4387181

#### ZARQA:

Zarqa Gov. Hospital ..... (05)983323  
Zarqa National Hospital ..... (05)900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital ..... (05)986731  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ..... (05)990990

#### IRBID:

Princess Beema Hospital (02)275555  
Roman Catholic Hospital (02)27275  
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital ..... (02)7101372, (02)7103101  
Rosary Sisters Hospital ..... (02)7102831, (02)7102011  
Specialty Hospital ..... (02)7103100

#### AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

#### INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

#### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
06:55 ..... Dhahran (RJ)  
07:15 ..... Sarva (RJ)  
09:30 ..... Bombay, Bahrain (RJ)  
09:30 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
10:05 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
10:05 ..... Muscat, Dubai (RJ)  
10:15 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
10:45 ..... Colombo (RJ)  
14:05 ..... Riyadh (add) (RJ)  
15:00 ..... London, Aqaba (RJ)  
16:25 ..... London (RJ)  
18:30 ..... Kuwait (RJ)  
19:05 ..... Bangkok, Doha (RJ)  
19:55 ..... Sharm Al Sheikh (add) (RJ)  
20:00 ..... Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)  
21:00 ..... Athens (RJ)  
22:00 London, Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
00:55 ..... Kuwait (add) (RJ)  
00:05 ..... Larnaca (RJ)  
02:35 ..... Cairo (add) (RJ)  
04:30 ..... Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)  
04:50 ..... Dubai (add) (RJ)

Other Flights  
13:15 ..... Riyadh (SV)  
14:10 ..... Sharqah (AH)

14:45 ..... Doha (QR)  
15:55 ..... Dubai (EK)  
17:25 ..... Muscat, Dubai (GF)  
18:40 ..... Beirut (ME)  
19:05 ..... Paris (AF)  
20:25 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)  
20:40 ..... Cairo (MS)  
23:10 ..... Istanbul (TK)  
00:25 ..... Moscow (SU)  
01:15 ..... Amsterdam (KL)  
04:10 ..... London (BA)  
08:20 ..... Alexandria (BA)

#### DEPARTURES

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
For Thursday  
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
13:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)  
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)  
23:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
For Friday  
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
17:30 Gaza (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)  
18:40 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)

12:15 ..... London (RJ)  
12:15 ..... Kuwait (RJ)  
12:30 ..... Amsterdam (RJ)  
15:45 ..... Athens (RJ)  
16:45 ..... Sharm Al Sheikh (add) (RJ)  
19:20 ..... Kuwait (add) (RJ)  
20:10 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
20:50 ..... Larnaca (RJ)  
21:40 ..... Dubai (add) (RJ)  
21:45 ..... Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)  
22:45 ..... Cairo (add) (RJ)  
00:10 ..... Kuala Lumpur (RJ)  
03:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)

#### Other Flights

08:50 ..... Damascus, Frankfurt (LH)  
14:45 ..... Riyadh (SV)  
15:00 ..... Annabab, Algiers (AH)  
15:35 ..... Doha (QR)  
17:00 ..... Damascus, Dubai (EK)  
18:15 ..... Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)  
20:00 ..... Beirut (ME)  
20:50 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)  
21:40 ..... Cairo (MS)  
01:55 ..... Moscow (SU)  
02:15 ..... Amsterdam (KL)  
04:45 ..... Alexandria (BA)  
06:00 ..... Istanbul (TK)  
07:25 ..... Paris (AF)  
09:05 ..... London (BA)

#### Royal Wings (RW) Flights

For Thursday  
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
11:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
19:45 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
20:15 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
For Friday  
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
13:30 Gaza (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
16:15 Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)  
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)



News in brief

PSD officials join force in Bosnia

AMMAN (Petra) — A group of Public Security Department officials has left for Bosnia Herzegovina to join the U.N. peace keeping force.

Sarairah orders new phone book

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Transport, Post and Telecommunications Jamal Sarairah said he instructed the Jordan Telecommunications Company to issue a new phone directory since all phone numbers have changed.

Health ministry completes first phase of immunisation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Eastern Amman Health Department has concluded the first stage of the National Immunisation Campaign against children's polio. Through its 50 centres, the department provided immunisation free of charge for 43,802 children under the age of five. The next five-day stage will start on April 24.

Queen Rania visits Dar Al Bir

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah accompanied by HRH Princess Zein Bint Al Hussein Wednesday visited Dar Al Bir (formerly Al Hashemeh Palace turned into an orphaned children's home) and distributed gifts to the 180 children cared for by nannies and foster mothers.

The Queen, who was briefed on the children's condition and the health and educational services, made the visit ahead of the 'Eid Al Adha' feast. She chatted with children and issued directives that the children continue to receive the best possible care.

King Hussein and Her Majesty Queen Noor formally opened the institution following the completion of nine months of renovations to turn the palace into a home for children upon the late King's directives.

It was in February 1997 when King Hussein announced that he was donating his palace after he had witnessed the children's poor living conditions during a visit to the old institution in



Jabal Ashrafieh.

The King ordered that the institution be placed under the supervision of the Royal Court, appointing his daughter Princess Zein as the institution's patron.

The nannies, on call 24 hours a day, are responsible for the children's well-being, clothing, feeding and house work.

The institution is operated by 65 staff members, including nannies, inspectors, cooks, nutritionists and administrators. It provides children with a home like environment, where kindergarten and primary education as well as medical care and recreational activities are provided.

Criminal Court upholds 'fit of fury' arguments

Brother released after serving five months for killing sister, father sentenced to nine months for killing daughter

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — A 29-year-old man walked free from the Criminal Court on Wednesday after being handed down a reduced sentence for killing his married sister, according to the man's attorney.

Imad I. claimed to have killed his sister, Hilwa, 35, for her alleged "immoral behaviour," in Salt in October 1998. He was detained on Oct. 26, one day after shooting the woman in her family's home in the Salalem suburb, and was sentenced to three months in prison.

The court ordered his release yesterday because he had already served his time.

Imad originally was handed a six-month prison term which was reduced to half, because the victim's husband and her father dropped charges against the defendant.

According to court documents, the defendant heard rumour that his sister, who had returned to the Kingdom from the West Bank after quarrelling with her 70-year-old husband,

was allegedly involved in "immoral relationships."

It added that the victim's husband informed Imad that he wanted to divorce Hilwa because "she was betraying him, and that he had taped a telephone conversation between her and her alleged lover."

On the morning of the incident, the court stated, the defendant went to his family's home where his sister was staying, and after a short argument about her alleged affair he found a gun and shot his sister five times.

The court had amended the charge of premeditated murder because it was proven that he committed his crime in a "fit of fury."

The defence attorney, Ahmad Najdawi, had asked the court in his closing argument for the minimum punishment since the defendant "supports a family and is a hard worker, and because the family of the victim dropped charges against the defendant."

Meanwhile, a second tribunal sentenced a 42-year-old

father to nine months in prison after he was found guilty by the Criminal Court of the manslaughter of his divorced daughter last year.

The man claimed to have killed his daughter in the name of "family honour."

The court tribunal declared F. Z. guilty of killing his daughter, 17-year-old Lami, on Nov. 24, 1998 in Gharaman Park, near Queen Alia International Airport Road.

He was first sentenced to one year, but the court decided to reduce his sentence to nine months because the family of both the suspect and the victim dropped charges against the defendant.

According to court documents, the victim had run away with a man whom she loved a few weeks prior to the incident. The couple was arrested by police shortly afterwards.

Her companion was detained on charges of raping a minor, while the woman was transferred to the governor's office, where her father signed

a guarantee that he would not harm his daughter, if she was released to his custody.

The father then took his daughter to the park and slit her throat. He surrendered to police shortly after committing the crime.

The defendant claimed in court that although he had promised not to harm his daughter and that he had forgiven her, he was enraged when she started showing him the places she used to go with her lover. He told the court that he could not control himself, drew a knife he was carrying and slit his daughter's throat.

As a result of his testimony, the court said it decided to amend the premeditated murder charges to manslaughter because it ruled that the defendant committed his crime in a "fit of fury."

Criminal Prosecutor Zuhair Aniyar told the Jordan Times Wednesday evening that he plans to appeal the verdict at the Court of Cassation, seeking a tougher punishment.

Daylight savings: Blessing or curse?

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Jordanians are mixed in their reactions to the decision to abolish daylight savings time.

Some feeling that foregoing the extra hour of daylight will infringe on their activities while others maintain it will not make much difference.

The government decision on Tuesday to abolish daylight savings time was based on studies by the Ministry of Energy and other independent institutions, which found that daylight savings time is not as economically efficient as it was once thought to be.

A prime ministry official said the decision is final, and Jordan will stick to the winter time all year round.

The study, conducted last year, showed that during the summer the country's electricity consumption is trimmed by less than one per cent, said Ahmad Bashir, Ministry of Energy secretary general.

Time switching is not feasible for us, said Bashir earlier last October, adding that the ministry submitted its reports on the study to the Cabinet along with recommendations to review the benefits of applying daylight-savings time.

Countries around the world set their clocks forward each year mostly to save energy.

According to the prime ministry official, who requested anonymity, the government began implementing the sum-

mer daylight-savings time in 1993 upon a recommendation from the energy ministry which said at the time that an extra hour of light would save the country energy.

Energy use and demand is related to sleeping routines.

"During winter time, my family wakes up before sunrise, which requires us to switch on lights for at least one hour. In the long run, this will cost me more money," said Mohammad Abu Hassan, a school teacher and a father of eight.

In an average home, around 25 per cent of all electricity consumed is used for lighting and small appliances such as TVs, video cassette recorders and stereos.

A good percentage of energy consumption occurs in the evening, when families are home. "By moving the clock ahead one hour, Jordan can cut on electricity consumption, since they spend less time at home in the evening," Abu Hassan said.

Summer hours save energy in the morning when people rise. The majority of Jordanians wake up before 7:00 a.m. during the work and school week. Because the sun is up, people turn on fewer lights, and thus usually use less energy in the morning, argues Mohammad Abu Sari, a school teacher.

Airline companies feel the pain more than others, and have expressed annoyance at

the government's unexpected decision.

"Flights are booked six months earlier. With the new hours, we have to change our entire schedules," said an airline manager. "How could we inform our customers about the time changes? We do not even have their addresses," he told the Jordan Times.

Additionally, according to the police, more lives are saved in the summer because more people travel home from work and school in daylight.

This measure is adopted by most countries in the region and for Jordan not to go along causes confusion and difficulties, argued Riad Khouri, an economist.

"With Jordan's new [year-

round] winter time, there will be extra cost in terms of fuel consumption because people in the evening turn their lights on earlier," he said.

The issue has also taken a political dimension.

"The government is trying to assert itself and prove it is different from other governments," Khouri told the Jordan Times.

However, others believe that the decision has little bearing on their lives.

"If I wake up early, I go to bed early, which leaves me using the same energy, but at different times of the day," said Samir Adel, a bank officer.

Foreign correspondents off the JPA hook till June

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — The Press and Publications Department (PPD) headed by Iyad Qattan on Tuesday extended its deadline for Jordanian journalists working with foreign agencies to amend their legal situation in accordance with the 1998 Press and Publications Law by three more months.

"We wish to inform you that the time limit for foreign offices to rectify the situation of their Jordanian correspondents has been extended till June 30, 1999," said the memo issued to media offices in Amman.

Earlier this month, the PPD issued a memorandum to more than 25 foreign media offices in the Kingdom demanding that Jordanian journalists employed with these agencies apply for membership with the Jordan Press Association in accordance with the press law and the 1999 Foreign Correspondents Regulations.

It first set date for journalists to rectify their situation by March 31st, adding that "the law will be applied after such a date." This entails banning non-JPA members from writing or transmitting TV and

radio material.

Article nine of the press law and article six of the foreign correspondents regulations, both approved by a Royal Decree and published in official newspapers, stipulate that all journalists working with foreign agencies must obtain JPA membership. However, they do not refer to foreign journalists practising in the country.

According to many, the demand was seen as "an attempt by the government and the JPA to curb Jordanian influence in Western media."

"There is no need for the regulations in the press law or the foreign correspondents regulations since both contradict the spirit of democracy and freedom of expression enjoyed by Jordanians under the liberal policy advocated by the late King Hussein and His Majesty King Abdullah," said Jamal Halaby, the Associated Press Bureau Chief in Amman.

Mohammad Ajlouni, director of Al Jazeera Television Satellite channel and ABC News offices in Amman told the Jordan Times that the JPA law was complicated and not in tune with modern journalism.

"The law does not differentiate between a writer and a TV correspondent. Membership conditions stipulate that a journalist is one who has previous experience in writing articles for local papers. I'm not a writer, therefore, I do not fit [the criteria], and I cannot start as an apprentice in writing now," he said. "What about my TV experience," he asked. He suggested amending the JPA law.

"It would take more than three months for any journalist who works with foreign offices to become a member of the JPA since most have not written for local papers," he added.

He said that banning those non-members was "harmful," because it meant no media coverage abroad.

"Banning all media offices from transmitting material because the law cannot adjust itself to the times is harmful," he added.

PPD Director Iyad Qattan seconded that view, saying the department extended the deadline period for three months because procedures were complicated and time consuming. He said the law is unfair to Jordanian journalists and that he hoped certain articles in

both laws would be changed. He said foreign press offices were relieved at the deadline extension.

Members of the foreign press, who have their own informal association that hosts regular meetings with Cabinet members, were initially surprised by the law and accused the JPA of "meddling in affairs outside its jurisdiction."

Randa Habib, Agence France Presse's bureau chief and chairperson of the Foreign Correspondents Club, said the club held recent talks with the minister of information and offered amendments to the law.

"There is no conclusion yet, but we are very optimistic," she said.

Qattan, who expects changes to both laws, said he issued an invitation to the entire press corps and other civil institutions to participate in a comprehensive "academic and objective" research aimed at amending such laws.

"All the obtained information will be handed to the minister of information [to follow up changes]," he said. "This time let's do it right, for God's sake."

UNRWA commissioner to 'seek all available means' to fill staff demands

Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Peter Hansen pledged to continue impressing upon donor countries the plight of Palestinian refugees and agency staff.

In a letter addressed to some 22,000 UNRWA staff in the agency's five areas of operation (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza), Hansen said on Wednesday, "I appreciate the effort that you [staff] are putting in light of the difficult conditions you are working in."

Last week, UNRWA staff representatives threatened to wage a series of strikes within two weeks if the agency did not heed demands for higher salary increases and better working conditions.

UNRWA suffers from a deficit of around \$60 million in this year's \$350 million budget, which has forced it to cut back its services.

The agency has been forced to adopt a series of austerity measures over the past five years, including a three-year employment policy which terminates the employees term at the end of the contract. More and more employees are now being hired on a per diem basis.

The refugee population, growing at 3.5 per cent annually, is placing massive strains on the agency's services resulting in added working loads on an already-stressed staff.

Maher Nasser, UNRWA headquarters liaison officer in Amman, noted that "the nature of the funding and the growing needs of the refugee population are heading in two different directions."

Agency doctors have complained of being overworked and understaffed. They say that on average they treat 120 patients a day at UNRWA clinics in Jordan.

"There have been numerous administrative and technical vacancies at the agency which have not been filled for some time, as though they have been frozen," staff representatives said. They said that this has "strained us even more and we refuse to take on any additional burdens."

"We don't even have the proper medicine with which to treat our patients. We don't have medicine for diabetes, hypertension, the flu, or other basic drugs," physicians told the Jordan Times.

Nasser admitted that vacancies have had to be frozen. Regarding the availability of medicine, he said: "Some delays do occur in

the delivery or clearance of medicine by the host country which results in shortages in our health care centres."

Approximately 3.6 million Palestinian refugees, 40 per cent of whom are believed to live in Jordan, benefit from UNRWA services. Since its creation following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, which led to the creation of Israel and the expulsion of millions of Palestinians to neighbouring countries, the agency has provided basic health, educational, relief, and social services.

In his letter to agency staff, Hansen said: "The agency has agreed to a number of measures which will have a positive impact on the conditions and regulations governing UNRWA employees."

Six months ago staff threatened to stage an open-ended strike across UNRWA's area of operations pushing for better working conditions and clearer remuneration policies. A strike was averted by the commissioner general who asked for the formulation of a joint working group of staff, union representatives and others from the agency's administration to review demands.

Since then several demands have been fulfilled, UNRWA officials say.

"There is now an already-implemented agreement on the new head teacher allowance, which has mainly benefited Jordan," said Nasser.

Hansen said measures will be taken in regards to early retirement, dependency allowances, health insurance, adjusting yearly increments, as well as increments for school principals. These measures, Hansen pointed out, are expected to cost over \$2.6 million this year.

A long-standing staff demand has been early retirement which has now been reduced.

"The age of retirement for male employees is now 50 years, instead of 55, and at 25 years of service instead of 30," Nasser said.

Another request by the working group that was approved by the commissioner relates to the increase in the agency's share in health insurance coverage.

Nasser explained that "the agency has an agreement with a health insurance company by which all area staff are reimbursed up to 80 per cent of health expenses. There's a monthly deduction in the salaries of staff which is matched by the agency."

UNRWA regulations stipulate that all staff must be covered by health insurance. "Those that are covered by

other health schemes, and opt not to participate in this scheme are free to do so," Nasser emphasised.

Agency staff told the Jordan Times they were never given the option to choose another health insurance company.

"We cannot afford the monthly salary deductions for health insurance and prefer to apply to another health insurance company with cheaper rates," they said.

Staff said they do not receive the relatively lucrative packages offered to employees of other U.N. agencies, nor do they benefit from local working policies.

Staff say that their benefits are not even on a par with those of government employees and that their salaries have not been consistent with the increase in the cost of living.

"Other U.N. agencies in Jordan do not have the same number of staff as UNRWA staff in Jordan. We provide direct services. It's a completely different entity and you cannot make the comparison," Nasser said.

He added: "If you compare the pay scales of agency staff and those of host countries we are actually paying more."

The pay policy takes into account the take home salary and a system of weighing

other fringe benefits of a government employee, Nasser said.

In 1996 staff say they accepted an 8.1 per cent salary increase which amounted to less than half of the expected increment.

The agency provided staff in Lebanon with a seven per cent increase this year.

"This was done because the Lebanese government introduced a new salary scale in the government which has increased certain categories of services and made them higher than our pay scale."

"This pay policy only serves to destroy the agency's infrastructure and create instability for the staff and reflects negatively on the quality of services given to refugees," read the statement.

Cost-reduction measures have included a 20 per cent cut in international staff and cuts in hospitalisation subsidies. This means that refugees now are only subsidised at government hospitals.

Hansen emphasised in his letter the need for dialogue between agency staff and administration and stressed that "dialogue with the staff union has not stopped, and I will continue to seek all available means to fulfill your demands."

What's Going On

LECTURE

Lecture and slide show by Professor Tom Sandqvist entitled "The Art of Ann Edholm" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

PLAY

Comedy entitled "A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed" at Al Thurayyah Hall, Village of Taybar (Tel. 4380631, 4655585), (daily at 9:00 a.m.).

FILM

"Armageddon" at Books@Cafe, Jabal Amman, on Sunday March 28 at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457/8).

EXHIBITIONS

"Amman... A Meeting Point" by Swedish artists Ann Edholm and Hakon Rhenberg at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists, until April 22.

Works on paper by Russian artist Yuri Pestov entitled "Al Ferdouse, the Rose Garden" at the Jordanian Plastic Artists Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until March 31. (Tel. 4623297).

Jordan Press Association (JPA) announces the following:

The JPA Council is calling the General Assembly for an annual meeting on Friday, April 23, 1999, at 10 a.m. at the Amman Chamber of Industry in Jabal Amman. In the event that if no quorum is convened on that date, the council will call for another meeting on Friday, April 30, 1999, at the same time and venue.

The agenda includes:

- the endorsement of final accounts and approval of the new year's budget;
- a debate on the council's administrative, financial and professional reports;
- the presentation of the internal draft law for the association and the housing scheme prepared by the council's members to be submitted to the concerned authorities;
- the election of the association president and council members;

Only General Assembly members whose fees are paid in full at least seven days before the date of the meeting can participate in the elections. Nominations for the post of president and council membership will be accepted 15 days before the election day and will be closed three days before the set date. The names of candidates will appear on the board at the JPA headquarters after the three-day nomination period.

JPA President Self Sharif



## Prodi confirmed as new commission chief

BERLIN (AFP) — European Union leaders on Wednesday appointed Romano Prodi as the next president of the European Commission, in a move designed to draw a line under the crisis created by last week's resignation of the EU executive in a corruption scandal.

"All the members of the European Council have agreed that Romano Prodi should be the new president of the European Commission," German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said at a special EU summit.

Prodi was a man of "great quality" with a "reform-oriented" record that made him well qualified to take the helm in Brussels, Schröder added.

Prodi, 59, a former Italian prime minister, will take over from the current President Jacques Santer within the next month but his appointment remains subject to a vote of approval from the European Parliament.

Santer and the 19 other commissioners resigned last week after the publication of damning criticism of their handling of fraud and corruption in Brussels.

Santer has said he wants to leave his post by the end of April to pursue his ambition of becoming a member of the European Parliament.

Wednesday's decision means there will be enough time for Prodi to be approved by the parliament before it breaks up in May for June elections.

Schröder said he expected a confirmation vote in the

week of April 12-16.

It remained unclear however what would happen to the other 19 commissioners, who are currently continuing to do their jobs in a caretaker role.

Jose-Maria Gil-Robles, the speaker of the European Parliament, said earlier on Wednesday that any commissioner criticised in the independent report on corruption should go along with Santer.

"Merely appointing a new president for the future, whilst allowing the existing commission to remain in office until August would not be a solution," Robles said.

There was both a "political imperative" to replace several commissioners and a legal requirement for "the commission to regain parliament's confidence," Robles said.

The comments amounted to a thinly-veiled threat that the assembly could veto Prodi as president if certain individual commissioners are not forced to leave with him.

Euro-MP's are particularly determined that former French prime minister Edith Cresson should not be allowed to carry on.

Cresson was severely criticised in an independent report on fraud, mismanagement and nepotism which last week triggered the mass resignation of the commission.

The report said she had been guilty of blatant nepotism and had concealed information about corruption in EU programmes for which she was responsible. Under the Treaty of

Amsterdam, which comes into force on May 1, the parliament has the power to veto both the new commission president and then the full commission team.

Around half of the current commissioners are expected to be reappointed for their governments to serve another five year term in Brussels.

Belgium and Portugal have indicated that they want their current commissioner to carry on until the end of the year. The two countries are reluctant to name the long-term replacements until after elections later in the year.

Britain has also indicated that it wants its two commissioners, Neil Kinnock and Sir Leon Brittan to continue to the end of the year, when the current team's term was due to expire.

Brittan is due to retire from public life then but Kinnock is expected to be named for another five years.

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke warmly of Prodi as someone of "considerable ability," with a record as a "proven reformer."

Britain has called for the new commission boss to be given a mandate to implement a radical overhaul of the way business is done in Brussels.

Prodi, a mild-mannered former economics professor, earned the respect of Europe's leaders for the way he whipped the Italian economy into shape to clinch the country's place as a founder member of the single European currency.



Kenji Mizutani, an engineer at Japan's Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., talks to the company's 'robotic pet' at a news conference in Tokyo, March 24, 1999. The computerised pet, featuring connectivity to remote hosts, is developed to provide assistance to aged persons. When the pet is talked to or touched, it responds with its built-in speaker or by the liquid crystal display mounted at the doll's eyes. Matsushita says the pets will not only serve as companions but help ensure the safety of the elderly who live alone as they can be watched remotely. The company says the pets will be commercialised after completion of verification tests (AFP photo)

## Malaysia rejects Indonesian refugees, tightens sea security

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Authorities in Malaysia's Sarawak state Wednesday sent a boatload of people fleeing ethnic strife in Indonesia back into international waters, the official Bernama news agency said.

The 411 people on the Indonesian timber boat, MV Permatia, entered Malaysian waters Tuesday at Sematan, 90 kilometres from Sarawak's capital of Kuching on Borneo island, Bernama said.

Indonesian consul Ayi Nygraha said a woman who gave birth to a baby girl on board late Tuesday was allowed to stay with her husband in Sarawak for a few days.

"I was worried that the baby cannot survive because of the crowded condition of the boat. So I have asked the authorities to allow the couple and their baby to stay in my house and arrange for them to leave the country by Monday," Nygraha told Bernama.

Local police chief Paul Kundang Atin said the

Madurese — 166 children and 110 women — fled Sambas district in the Indonesian province of West Kalimantan which borders Sarawak and is about eight hours by sea from Sematan.

The boat was allowed to berth overnight and the immigrants were given food, he said.

It left Wednesday morning for international waters, heading to the West Kalimantan provincial capital of Pontianak where thousands of Madurese settlers have sought shelter from more than a week of bloodshed.

Nygraha said it was the first reported case of Indonesians fleeing to Sarawak since ethnic violence broke out Jan. 15 with indigenous Malays and Dayaks leaving more than 180 dead.

But he added that the situation in Sambas was now under control with the reinforcement of troops.

Sarawak deputy state secretary Hatta Solhee said the state government would work with the Indonesian

authorities to ensure that the immigrants were sent home safely, with adequate food, medical supplies and fuel.

"While we sympathise with their plight, we are unable to accommodate them in Sarawak due to the shortage of facilities," he added.

Malaysian marine police have been deployed to prevent any further landing by Indonesian refugees.

"We will not allow any landing of refugees. We will shoo them back into Indonesian waters," a senior security officer in Kuching told AFP, adding "police are on alert to prevent any incursions."

The officer said there were no fears of Madurese refugees trying to enter Sarawak by land due to the "presence of indigenous Dayak tribesmen" in the state.

He also ruled out a possible spillover of the Indonesian ethnic violence into Malaysia, even though the Sarawak Dayaks are related to the ones in Indonesia.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### N. Korea slams U.S. over evacuation exercise

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea on Wednesday lambasted the United States for carrying out an evacuation exercise for its citizens in South Korea, saying the drill was a sign of imminent war. Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the exercise, due to begin here Friday, demonstrated that the United States and its ally, South Korea, were not interested in dialogue and peace. "The U.S. and South Korean warhawks are these days busy with frequent war exercises under different names aimed at making an outbreak of war against the North a fait accompli, bringing war exercises closer to a real war and rounding off its preparations at the final stage," it said. "These war manoeuvres will only result in precipitating their final ruin," it added. U.S. forces stationed here are carrying out an evacuation drill under which about 120 U.S. citizens and family of military personnel will be taken in Japan in simulate a state of emergency. U.S. military sources said the drill was "routine" and not out of the ordinary. Some 37,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the South to ward off any possible attack from the North.

### Apartheid scientist charged with 53 serious crimes

PRETORIA (AFP) — Wouter Basson, who spearheaded apartheid South Africa's biochemical warfare research, was Wednesday charged with 16 counts of murder, 13 of conspiracy to murder and 24 of theft and fraud. The scientist was also charged with two counts of attempted murder. Basson was not asked to plead during his brief appearance in the Pretoria Magistrate's Court, and the trial was postponed to Oct. 4. According to earlier reports in local newspapers, which had obtained copies of the charge sheet, the fraud and theft charges stem from attempts by Basson to steal millions of rands from his military paymasters. The reports said he pocketed some 57 million rands (about \$25 million at the time) in funds given to him by the apartheid government to purchase chemical and biological weapons agents from foreign countries. It was not clear what the murder charges related to. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission last year heard testimony of how Basson used his knowledge to devise lethal weapons of assassination and cruel plots to preserve white rule in Africa. Fellow scientists told the commission that Basson had authorised the production of toxins, germs and poisons to kill anti-apartheid activists. Basson, who is currently free on bail, is still working as a medical doctor at a military hospital in Pretoria. Upon leaving the court he told reporters he was unsure what the outcome of his long-awaited trial would be. "I don't know. I have to go to theatre now. I have a lot of work to do," he said.

### Vietnam sentences three religious members for anti-regime literature

HANOI (AFP) — A Vietnamese court has jailed three men for distributing anti-Communist literature and supporting an overseas religious group, a court official said on Wednesday. The court in Danang jailed Han Vu Hung, 37, for two years on Monday for writing and distributing information in open letters which "described badly society and the ruling regime," the official told AFP. Hung was arrested in September 1998 for distributing a letter supporting an illegal overseas religious group named "Thanh Hai Vo Thuong Su," the official said. After Hung's arrest, police confiscated more documents, cassettes and videotapes from his home, which authorities said would have been used to "proselytise on behalf of the group and spreading negative propaganda about Vietnam." Former soldier Bui Duc Phu and Doan Van Khanh, both of Danang, were each jailed for a year for having helped Hung distribute open letters. All three were charged under Article 205A under the Criminal Code for "taking advantage of the rights of freedom and democracy and violating the state's interest," the court official said. Last week U.N. Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, Abdelfattah Amor, released a report critical of religious freedoms in Vietnam, particularly for groups not officially recognised by the government. One diplomat said Hung's sentencing demonstrated the "continuing suspicion the Vietnamese government has of organised religion, especially the less established ones. Some religious activity is still seen as a potential threat to the monopoly enjoyed by the Communist Party," he added.

### Liberian soldiers storm village, loot and rape

MONROVIA (AFP) — A group of armed Liberian soldiers who stormed a village in the western part of the country looted and raped several women, independent radio reports said here Wednesday. The incident occurred last week in Dambala, 110 kilometres west of Monrovia, in a town bordering neighbouring Sierra Leone. The rampaging soldiers, who apparently were in search of a missing man, also beat and detained scores of elders, according to Lahai Kamara, the village chief. The missing man was later found, reports said. Residents were forced to flee after several hours of sporadic shooting in the village. The soldiers were believed to have fired in the air, as no casualties were reported. Defence Minister Daniel Chea said the commander of the soldiers was brought to Monrovia for interrogation, and that the unit's command structure in Dambala had been reshuffled. Chea said the situation in Dambala was under control. In a related development, one police officer and a civilian were injured in two separate shooting incidents between police and soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) in Monrovia, press reports said Wednesday. One incident took place in Monrovia before dawn on Sunday at a slaughterhouse being guarded by AFL soldiers. Owners of the abattoir accused members of the police Special Operation Division (SOD) of looting 60 cattle and \$700 in the shootout, which injured a police officer. Police have denied the charges. In the second incident, which also occurred on Sunday morning, a civilian was injured when police attempted to arrest a soldier caught smoking marijuana in a Monrovia ghetto, witnesses said.

### At least 32 killed in Kenyan train accident

NAIROBI (AFP) — At least 32 people were killed and 26 were injured when a passenger train derailed between Nairobi and Mombasa early Wednesday, the Kenyan Committee for the Prevention of Catastrophes said. The death toll is still provisional, the group said, adding that the injured were being flown to Nairobi. Twenty-three of the injured are in critical condition, an official of the African Medical and Research Foundation said. A reporter for the national radio KBC who was aboard the train said many passengers were pinned under the cars. He said the accident happened while the train was travelling very fast down a steep slope.

## Jiang defends China's rights record

MILAN, Italy (AFP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin defended Beijing's human rights record Wednesday, insisting the international community must take into account his country's "reality" on the issue.

In his first public comments on the issue since arriving in Italy for a 10-day European trip, he insisted that Beijing adheres to international human rights principles.

"On the question of human rights and democratic freedom, China respects the universal principles recognised by the international community on human rights," he said in an address at Milan city hall.

"But I believe that the reality in which we live should be taken into account," he added in this northern Italian city, where Jiang arrived

Tuesday night after two days in Rome clouded by human rights protests.

Jiang has not mentioned human rights since arriving in Italy last Saturday for a trip which will also take him to Switzerland and Austria.

"I have said nothing on these questions for a little time, but I think it is very useful to improve our mutual understanding," he said.

The 72-year-old noted that he and other Chinese statesmen had lived through "the thousands vicissitudes of the war with the Japanese and against the nationalists."

"We were determined to call for liberty and democracy," he said, adding that "China is in the process of taking the route of improving its legal system."

Jiang was in Milan, Italy's economic capital, to promote business and economic ties with Italy, Beijing's third

trade partner within the European Union.

"Milan is the financial, industrial and commercial centre of Italy," he said, comparing it with China's economic powerhouse Shanghai, of which Jiang is a former mayor.

Jiang's two day official visit to Rome Monday and Tuesday was peppered with small but vocal demonstrations over Beijing's rights record.

Italian Premier Massimo D'Alema raised the issue in talks Tuesday, after President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro openly called for "more rapid progress" on democracy measures at a state banquet his Jiang's honour.

Jiang is due to travel to Switzerland on Thursday and Austria on Saturday, before heading home next Tuesday.

## Espionage suspect was given new job while under investigation

NEW YORK (AP) — A scientist already suspected of being a spy for China was chosen to run a sensitive nuclear weapons programme at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the New York Times reported Wednesday.

Wen Ho Lee was put in charge of updating computer software for nuclear weapons in the spring of 1997, less than a year after the FBI began investigating whether China obtained U.S. secrets during the 1980s that gave it the technology to create miniaturised warheads.

China has denied that it engaged in nuclear espionage.

Lee, a Taiwanese-born American citizen who was qualified for the job, was approved for the Los Alamos post by the FBI. The Times reported, citing unidentified intelligence and law-enforcement officials.

He was promoted to avoid raising his suspicions about the investigation and with the expectation that his telephone conversations would be wiretapped, officials said.

However, the FBI's requests for a secret wiretap were repeatedly denied by justice department officials who believed there were insufficient grounds to obtain court approval for the surveillance.

Lee also was allowed to hire a Chinese national as a research assistant. The assistant, a postgraduate student whose name was not released, was later investigated by the FBI, which did not find any intelligence connection.

It is not known whether the assistant, who was at the university of Pittsburgh on a student visa, was still in the country.

Lee's security clearance was not revoked until late last year. He was fired by the new Mexico lab on March 8, and has taken two polygraph tests. He appeared to pass the first test, but the second found him to be deceptive, officials said.

He has not been charged with any crime. Lee has not been seen publicly, but reportedly has hired a lawyer.

## 'Beijing must atone for Tiananmen'

BEIJING (R) — China's most senior official to be jailed over a bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in 1989 has called for Communist leaders to at last make amends.

Bao Tong, in a letter to be sent to the nation's top leaders, called for China to reverse its "wrongful assessment" of the pro-democracy movement, suppressed 10 years ago when troops fired on mass student protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

"The history of bloodshed remains in people's hearts; they will not forget," wrote Bao, an aide to former Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, who was ousted by hardliners in 1989 for sympathising with the students.

"No one can ever successfully cover up such an event," added Bao who has been under tight police surveillance since his release from seven years in jail in 1996.

Chinese leaders have ruled out a reassessment of the 1989 protests, officially labelled a counter-revolutionary rebellion aimed at toppling the government.

Troops backed by machine guns and tanks crushed the protests on June 4, 1989. Hundreds died and many more were jailed.

Bao's bold letter is to be sent to President Jiang Zemin, Premier Zhu Rongji and the Communist Party's seven-member politburo standing committee on Thursday, 70 days before the 10th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square bloodshed.

The state council, or cabinet, declined to comment on the letter, a copy of which was made available to Reuters on Wednesday.

Bao was jailed in 1989 for leaking state secrets. His former boss, Zhao, lives under virtual house arrest in Beijing.

"It is only a matter of time, there is no other choice but to reverse the wrongful assessment of

June 4th," Bao said.

"You may choose whether it is done now or later, and whether it is done through good judgment or by force," Bao said the benefits to China would be great and the cost minimal if the Communist Party reversed its verdict. It would "win the hearts and minds of the Chinese people, as well as sincere respect and applause from around the world", Bao said.

Bao, addressing Jiang and Zhu as "Zhu Gong" — a classical, polite form of address meaning "gentlemen" — said the 1989 bloodshed was "shameful to humanity".

"Using hundreds of thousands of troops to crack down on unarmed students and civilians was something the Chinese Communist Party should never have done," said Bao, who was expelled from the party after the crackdown.

"And letting the wrongful assessment of the events to remain without reversal means

the continuation of severe pain for the Chinese people," he said.

"They were impassioned young people with a sense of justice and their words spoke for the country and for the people," Bao said. "Their demonstrations constituted neither riot nor rebellion."

The death of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, architect of the crackdown, in February 1997 greatly reduced opposition to a reversal of the official verdict on the demonstrations, Bao said.

Bao said Deng's greatest legacy was correcting Mao Zedong's mistakes after the Communist Party chairman died in 1976 and now the current leadership had an opportunity to right Deng's wrongs. Deng dumped Mao's ultra-leftist and egalitarian policies in the late 1970s and embraced market-oriented reforms, turning China into an economic powerhouse from a backwater.



**S IN BRIEF**  
Area slams U.S. evacuation exercise

48 scientist charged  
53 serious crimes



Demonstrators clash with a policeman during a protest to denounce Paraguayan President Raul Cubas in the wake of the assassination of the country's vice president, Luis Maria Argana in Asuncion. Maria Argana, a bitter rival of Raul Cubas, was killed in a hail of bullets by gunmen in military uniform, plunging the nation into turmoil (AFP photo)

## Vice president slain, Paraguay plunged into turmoil

ASUNCION (AFP) — Vice President Luis Maria Argana, a bitter rival of Paraguayan president, was killed in a hail of bullets by gunmen in military uniform, plunging the South American nation into turmoil.

Argana followers blamed the assassination on President Raul Cubas triggering violent demonstrations outside Congress late Tuesday. Cubas has ordered the army to back up the police in quelling any unrest.

Police said four men wearing military camouflage uniforms opened fire with a shotgun and an M-16 rifle as the vice president was going to his office in the capital Tuesday morning.

A grenade thrown at Argana's vehicle did not explode, police said.

"He was shot three or four times in the heart, the side and the legs," Argana's personal attorney Icho Planas told local radio.

Argana's bodyguard was also killed in the attack, while driver Victor Raul Barrios was seriously injured.

Cubas, who took office for a four-year term last August, ordered Paraguay's borders sealed, and barred aeroplanes from entering or leaving the country as police hunted the assassins.

But the vice president's supporters in the sharply divided Colorado ruling party immediately pointed fingers at Cubas and his political mentor, populist retired General Lino Oviedo.

Cubas and Oviedo "will be hung in a public square, together with their families," Planas warned, adding he predicted the assassination "is the beginning of a blood bath for our country."

"Cubas and Oviedo planned the murder," claimed Nicanor Duarte, a candidate for party president.

Meanwhile, anti-riot police used water cannon to disperse about 1,000 protesters outside Congress when they began marching on the presidential palace demanding Cubas' resignation.

Argana's supporters smashed car windows and beat ruling party or opposition officials and tried to enter the American hospital where the vice president was taken.

The Central Workers' Union Tuesday called for an indefinite general strike to protest Argana's murder.

Former president Juan Carlos Wasmosy, Cubas' predecessor, read a statement to reporters that also blamed Cubas for the killing.

"The person responsible for the period of chaos, violence and bloodshed that Paraguay is undergoing is the head of the executive branch," said Wasmosy, accused by Cubas last month of conspiring with Argana, 66, to oust him from office.

Cubas, however, said his conscience was untroubled by accusations that he and Oviedo were behind Argana's assassination.

"I find it deplorable that any political group would use this tragedy to gain an advantage," the president said.

Oviedo issued a statement denying any implication in the assassination, which he called "regrettable, deplorable and barbaric." He urged "exemplary punishment for the terrorists behind this savage crime."

Condemnations of the killing poured in from the United States and Latin

American capitals. In the first political fallout from the assassination, the interior minister resigned, and was replaced by Carlos Cubas, the president's brother.

Carlos Cubas is a member of Argana's Colorado party faction who broke with his brother after the president's controversial move to pardon his mentor Oviedo of conspiracy conviction.

Oviedo had received a 10-year prison sentence for leading a failed 1996 coup attempt against then-President Wasmosy.

Cubas, 54, had been Oviedo's running mate in the May 1998 presidential elections but took the top slot when the former army chief's candidacy was banned due to his conviction.

Argana — a close collaborator of former dictator Alfredo Stroessner, who ran this country from 1954 to

1989 — had finished second in the party's primaries and became Cubas' vice presidential candidate.

Cubas commuted the general's sentence three days after taking office.

From that moment angry Argana loyalists in the Colorado Party combined with opposition members to stonewall Cubas' legislative projects, and moved to impeach the president of this South American nation of 5.3 million.

An impeachment vote had been set for April 7.

Speaking to reporters after the killing Tuesday, Cubas said he regretted that Argana had turned down the government's offer of a bulletproof vehicle.

"He declined to accept and unfortunately the tragedy occurred," the president said. "He preferred to provide for his own security."

## South African court jails Boesak for six years

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — Former anti-apartheid cleric Allan Boesak was jailed for six years Wednesday after being found guilty by a South African court of stealing foreign donor money.

Judge John Foxcroft sentenced Boesak to two years' imprisonment each on three counts of theft and one of fraud involving more than 1.34 million rand (\$224,000) from his now-defunct Foundation for Peace and Justice (FPI) charity.

Foxcroft said two of the sentences should run concurrently, imposing an effective six-year sentence.

Boesak, who was surrounded by his family and supporters in the over-

crowded courtroom, fought back tears when the sentence was pronounced.

His lawyers immediately sought leave to appeal the conviction and sentencing.

In passing sentence, the judge dismissed arguments by Boesak's lawyers that the high-profile cleric should be treated more leniently because of his contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle.

"I know of no reason in law why a person who did a lot of good for the country should be exonerated," the judge said.

A large crowd gathered at the Cape High Court to hear the sentence passed, including Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, the highest-ranking

member of the African National Congress (ANC), of which Boesak is a prominent member, to attend.

Manuel told reporters outside the court that he was doing so "in a spirit of caring."

Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu had appealed to Foxcroft not to jail his anti-apartheid colleague, saying it was "not surprising that those of us who threw ourselves wholeheartedly into the (anti-apartheid) struggle may have made mistakes."

The judge dismissed this argument, saying Tutu's use of the word "mistakes" in his affidavit — read to the court during a mitigation of sentence hearing Tuesday

— was "a very loose definition."

"We all make mistakes but we are not all facing prison sentences," Foxcroft said.

The judge also said it was "impossible" to weigh the effect of Boesak's role in the anti-apartheid struggle against the consequences of his theft.

"I cannot say what the circumstances would have been if some of the money that he stole would have reached the communities for which they were intended."

The money was donated to victims of apartheid by Scandinavian donor agencies and U.S. singer Paul Simon.

## Suspected North Korean spy ships escape Japanese navy

TOKYO (AFP) — Two suspected North Korean spy boats Wednesday escaped Japan's clutches by simply ignoring a dramatic display of naval aerial bombing and cannon fire, officials said.

Japanese planes and destroyers opened warning fire for the first time since World War II in a vain attempt to stop the vessels, which were spotted inside its territorial waters.

Tokyo demanded that North Korea return the boats after strict Japanese laws restricting military engagement allowed them to flee towards the Stalinist state despite a nighttime chase in the Sea of Japan lasting more than 12 hours.

The mystery ships, disguised as Japanese fishing boats, fled at around 30 knots. According to government officials quoted by Japanese media, they later, reached North Korean territorial waters.

"We can't confirm that the two ships belong to North Korea," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiromu Nonaka.

"We have asked North Korea through Japanese embassies in New York and Beijing to seize and hand over the boats to Japan as there is a possibility the vessels will

enter North Korean waters," he added.

"But there has been no response."

If the ships were North Korean, it would be "very regrettable," Nonaka said, noting that Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi had just returned from a trip to South Korea to unite policy on dealing with Pyongyang.

Japanese P-3C anti-submarine aircraft earlier dropped a dozen 150-kilogramme bombs into the sea near the boats and naval destroyers fired warning shots from five-inch cannon.

The U.S. embassy here said Washington was "seriously concerned about the incursion of two unidentified ships into Japanese waters and has been closely consulting with our Japanese allies on this issue."

"We are working together with Japan to obtain more information," it said in a statement.

U.S. surveillance aircraft were involved in tracking the ships, said the embassy, and "we will continue to maintain close contact with our Japanese counterparts."

Japanese legislation adopted after its defeat in World War II allows troops to warn intrud-

ing vessels but not to attack them except in self-defence.

"We could not help but decide to stop our chase as they ignored our warnings and fled toward North Korea," Defence Agency chief Hosi Norita told a news conference.

"We failed to capture them because we could not fully use arms under law. But we showed our strong determination at home and abroad that the Self-Defence Force is ready to handle such an incident," he added.

"I'm sure that our stance to the incident will be a big deterrent against similar cases in the future."

The chase came just as Japan was hoping for signs of a thaw in relations with the North Korean regime after it fired a missile over Japan in August.

The two 30-metre, 100-tonne ships, disguised as fishing boats but carrying no nets and bristling with antennae, were seen on nationwide television evading Japan's apparently helpless forces.

The naval flotilla gave up pursuing one of the high-speed boats as it moved out of Japan's air defence zone toward the Korean peninsula

at 3:20 a.m. (1820 GMT Tuesday).

"It might have provoked a dangerous situation if we had pursued further," Norita said.

The chase of the second ship ended by 8:00 a.m. (2300 GMT) as it too crossed the air defence zone, about 500 kilometres outside Japan's airspace.

A Japanese patrol plane detected a suspected MiG 21 North Korean aircraft approaching the area where the Japanese naval vessels were giving chase, said the defence chief.

The premier told parliament he wanted to consider revising the Self-Defence Law, which restricts the use of weapons by Japanese troops against intrusions into its territory.

A government official said Tokyo had told Seoul and Moscow of the intrusion. Together with North Korea and Japan, South Korea and Russia also have coastlines facing the Sea of Japan.

The chase may fuel debate in parliament over a proposed greater role for the navy in coastal waters under a U.S.-Japan agreement to intensify defence cooperation to cope with nearby crises.

# SALE ENDS TODAY

## A FREE\* LINE FOR EVERYONE

# in MARCH '99

Fastlink wants everyone to get a mobile line this year. So, during the month of March, Fastlink is giving lines away for free! That means no connection fee! What's more, Fastlink is waiving the first month's subscription fee! And, so that you can call your friends and family, Fastlink is offering a Motorola D520 for only JD 70!

### Fastlink... Keeping You Close To Those Who Matter The Most..

For more information call us at: Amman: 011 2010, Wihda (Taybeh Village): 477 0770, Ajlun: 03 202 2557, Irbid (Housing Bank Complex): 02 251 691, and 111 on your mobile, or contact one of our direct sales representatives.

Authorized Dealers: Madaba: 464 7666, Al-Rod Al-Dunya: 560 2924, Sweidha: 551 8097, Al-Ram: 551 9553, Madaba: 552 1411, Irbid: 586 1055, Tadmor: 566 9996, Samarra: (BSA): 462 1599, Ghazal: 551 8778, Hama: 567 7729, Zarqa (Hadi): 02 270061, Al-Habeeb (Tah): 03 343710.

\* Please Note: (1) A JD 100 deposit may apply. (2) Offer does not include activation charges. Prices subject to 10% government sales tax. Offer not applicable to Sundry subscriptions. Jordanian nationals must present proof of their national identity number. Non-residents must present proof of their residency. Motorola D520 subject to availability. Motorola D520 available separately at JD 273. Regular rates will be applied if subscription is terminated within 90 days. Offer ends March 25th, 1999.

GSN



**Fastlink**  
Keep Close



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab newspaper published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Abdel Salam Tarawneh

Vice Chairman &amp; Director General

Mohammad Amad

Executive Editor

Abdullah Hasanat

Responsible Editor

Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising offices

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Facsimile: 5696183

E-mail: jtimes@go.com.jo

Web Site: http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department.

## Peace not in pieces

WHEN THE Palestinian National Authority recently foiled a major suicide bombing intended for Tel Aviv, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to thank him for saving many Israeli lives and described the Palestinian security cooperation "a positive step." But once again dousing hopes that could have been built on this cooperation, Netanyahu quickly added that the "Palestinian Authority is not acting systematically" against terrorism. It is obvious therefore that no matter how much and how far the PNA aids Israel in thwarting terrorist acts by Palestinian extremists, Netanyahu will not be satisfied.

The Israeli leader has already developed a pattern of dismissing every positive move the Palestinians extend to Israel. The reason is obvious: Netanyahu will continue to abort every effort to fulfill his country's commitments under the Oslo accords and the Wye River memorandum and will stop at nothing to accomplish that strategic objective. For the Israeli prime minister reciprocity means an endless Israeli downgrading of every determined Palestinian effort to live up to their end of the bargain. No wonder many of his own people want to vote him and his Likud Party out of office next May.

The trouble with Netanyahu is that he is unable to see the total picture when it comes to the peace process. Netanyahu is capable of only seeing bits and pieces of peace in the region in a manner that is unconnected. By his proven inability to develop a wholistic view of peace in the Middle East, Netanyahu has ruled himself out as a potential peacemaker.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh said everybody is talking about privately-owned schools, hospitals and universities as they are the success-stories of the Kingdom's privatisation programme. However, Masarweh added, certain measures are needed to strike a balance between these and limited-income families that want to provide a decent education for their children. It is not logical to pay JD3,500 for tuition for 11th and 12th graders at private schools in addition to other expenses, Masarweh said. He added that a "distinguished" school was ready to provide a JD400 class a week for those who want to improve their Arabic and English, which would mean that a family with four children has to pay JD14,000 a year. The writer said he was not trying to create equality between all classes of a society that describes itself as "open-minded," but urged the government to strike a balance between all citizens' different interests.

Al Dustour's Abul Majid Jaradat said parliamentary indications about whether or not to give the government a vote of confidence will not be taken "seriously." Jaradat said he does not expect "magical" or immediate solutions, because no government begins from nothing; either it starts where the previous one left off, or takes a new approach to correct former policies. His Majesty King Hussein struggled to build the nation; the government is now required to continue this effort and preserve the achievements that will benefit coming generations. Jaradat said he is confident that the current government will tackle its task with vigour through the wisdom of the "young King," who inherited his father's skills — a factor which will reassure citizens that the government will continue developing the nation.

## The outrageous, the odd and the unusual

THE OTHER day I was browsing through an interesting book which I borrowed from a friend. Entitled "The Wordsworth Book of Intriguing Words" and subtitled "The Insomniac's Dictionary of the Outrageous, Odd and Unusual," it lists all kinds of outrageous, odd, and unusual words.

Like what? Well, like all the phobia-words you can think of, the mania-words, the insomnia-words, the collective nouns for animals, the short words, the animal-young words, etc.

Not all the words in the book are interesting and useful, of course. There is little use in knowing that empressionia is abnormal interest in fire, crennomania is abnormal interest in cliffs, ichthyomania is obsession with fish, etc. For one thing, these concepts seem ridiculous (at least at this point in time); for another, one can never remember these words.

Some words are truly amusing, though. Logodiarthea (no, it is not what you think) is rapid, voluble speech; logorhea is excessive or abnormal talkativeness; hypnophobia is fear of sleep; phobophobia is fear of fear; ommatophobia is fear

of eyes, eleutherophobia is fear of freedom; euphobia is fear of good news; patophobia is fear of everything.

Of all the words in the books, it is the phobia and mania words that interested me most. Look at the following mania words, many of which describe interesting phenomena in our society: logomaniac: overtalkativeness; metromania: mania for writing verses (too many poets among us); scribomania: writing a long succession of unconnected words (the teachers among us know what this means); typomania: writing for publication (too many writers among us); amaxomania: mania for being in vehicles (so there is a word for this phenomenon!); ballistomania: abnormal interest in bullets (summer is fast approaching and weddings will be plentiful); doromania: compulsive desire to give presents (no comment!); hydromania: morbid craving for water (summer is coming early this year); okomania: abnormal desire to be at home; theomania: belief that one is a God; uranomania: delusion that one is divine; demomania: abnormal interest in crowds; garromania:

abnormal interest in marriage; kathisomania: abnormal interest in sitting; kinesomania: abnormal interest in movement; mythomania: compulsion to exaggerate; paranomania: manifesting joy by complaining; politicomania: abnormal interest in politics; eciomania: being domineering towards members of the family but humble towards those in authority; pseudomania: propensity to make false statements; sopomania: irrational belief in one's great wisdom; xenomania: excessive interest in foreign customs.

But many phobia and mania words pertaining to our society are not to be found in the book. I take this opportunity to suggest some of them.

Under phobia, I would add: disciplinophobia: fear of discipline; dilphobia: fear of diligence; direphobia: fear of being direct; effiphobia: fear of efficiency; planophobia: fear of planning; caulophobia: fear of caution; subdophobia: fear of being subtle; tactophobia: fear of tactfulness; correctophobia: fear of correctness; accuryphobia: fear of accuracy; skillophobia: fear of skillfulness; fairphobia: fear of fair-

## View from Academia



Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

ness; justophobia: fear of justice; promptophobia: fear of promptness; punctophobia: fear of punctuality; sophisophobia: fear of being sophisticated; courtophobia: fear of being courteous; stuposophobia: fear of stopping at a stop sign; signophobia: fear of signalling when making a turn; sideophobia: fear of walking on the sidewalk; pedecrossophobia: fear of using pedestrian crossings; linestandphobia: fear of standing in line; etc.

Under mania, I would add: breadomania: love of bread; phonomania:

love of telephone; leftolanomania: love of the left lane; hormomania: love of blowing the horn; autointimania: love of getting close to others when motoring; hurrymania: being always in a hurry; mansomania: love of manasir; reliomania: love of reliance on others; wedprossomania: love of wedding processions; truckparkrez: love of parking trucks in residential areas; truckdrivpicksite: love of driving trucks to picnic sites; diaphthrowpicksite: love of throwing diapers at picnic sites; hoseearwash: love of washing cars with hose pipes; lambslaughter: love of slaughtering lambs in the middle of the street; applicproceprocras: love of procrastinating when processing applications; cigbutcarwin: love of throwing cigarette butts from car windows; gastationsmok: love of smoking at gas stations; hitpedesshould: love of hitting shoulders of fellow pedestrians; steppedessshoe: love of stepping on pedestrians' shoes; stareatother: love of staring at others; etc.

There are many outrageous, odd and unusual words which one can add to this dictionary. I have given you but a small sample.

## Run Azmi run

PALESTINIAN CITIZENS in the state of Israel represent 18% of the population. Since the establishment of the state in 1948 no Arab has ever been appointed to a cabinet position or deputy minister post, or the High Court. High level governmental positions have been systematically denied Palestinian Israelis as a matter of policy. And if Oriental Jews have faced discrimination by the ruling European Jewish leadership, the Arab population in Israel has faced a formal policy of racism against them. The Law of Return which applies only to the right of Jews around the world to come to Israel and gain immediate citizenship has been reflected in one way or another in government policies. Palestinian Israelis who left their homes during the 1948 war are considered absentees and barred from returning to their lands and homes which are within the boundaries of the state. Housing, budgets and employment policies also reflect this discrimination based on the fact that these citizens of the state are not Jewish. The situation of Palestinian Israelis is not much different from that of the blacks of America. One major difference is the presence of a constitution in the United States which guarantees the rights of all citizens irrespective of their color, gender, ethnic origin or religion.

Dr. Azmi Bishara has been one of the few members of the Israeli Knesset who has made the issue of citizenship his focus. A proud Palestinian from Nazareth, Dr. Bishara wants Israel to be a country for its citizens and not a country for any particular religion. Dr. Bishara's party Al Tajam'u (National Alliance) formed a coalition in the last

elections with the Communist-dominated Democratic Front For Peace and Equality. That relationship has gone sour. He had resigned himself not to run for Prime Minister if a coalition of Arab parties was agreed upon.

Anempts at forming a unified Arab list for the coming elections have failed. Members of Dr. Bishara's party have been busy collecting signatures to allow their party leader to run in next May's elections for Prime Minister. Thus the failed coalition talks with other Arab lists made it possible for Bishara to be the first Arab to run for Prime Minister in Israel. Of course, Dr. Bishara doesn't expect to win even though this is the land of miracles. And there are many, including Arab leaders in Israel and some in the Palestinian National Authority who are not happy about Bishara's eminent decision. Some claim that such a decision will further splinter Arab votes while others fear that such a decision will help right wing circles in Israel. With Yishaq Mordechai and Benny Begin also running for Prime Minister, Bishara's plans to run will not hurt the peace camp in Israel. A second round for prime minister is inevitable unless everyone except Netanyahu and Barak withdraw at the last minute.

The Reverend Jesse Jackson faced the same situation in the 1980s. African Americans were also discriminated against and were not taken seriously in the political arena. No black had ever run for America's highest office and Jesse Jackson knew that he had no chance. But his run for the presidency had as much to do with raising awareness as trying to win the elections.

## Jerusalem Life



Daoud Kuttub

Azmi Bishara is in a similar position. The results of the coming elections are expected to produce an Israeli leader who will conclude permanent status talks with the Palestinians. Netanyahu wants Israel to be run by a strong leader, while Barak wants to concentrate attention on education and health rather than settlements. But Azmi Bishara's calls are more basic and holistic. The state of Israel needs a constitution that grants its citizens equality under the law. An Israeli, regardless of where he was born or what his religion is should have the same rights, obligations and opportunities.

A Russian or Ethiopian Jew who decides next week to come to Israel ought not have more rights than an Arab born in Nazareth or Um Al Fahm.

As a resident of East Jerusalem, and not a citizen of the state of Israel, I will not be voting in the next Israeli elections. But I can say what millions of African Americans told Jesse Jackson: Run Azmi Run.

## Kingdom come

NAME A Middle East kingdom pushing to develop its tourism sector. If you answer "Jordan" you are of course correct, but replying "Saudi Arabia" is not off the mark either. Name an Arabian peninsula state interested in promoting its small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The reply "Yemen" is right, but the Saudis are also now into giving SMEs a higher priority.

So how come Saudi Arabia, a conservative society that also happens to be the world's largest oil exporter, is interested in promoting tourism? And why is it that SME development, often a poor man's game and practised by many others in the region and the Third World in general, the Saudis' less affluent neighbours in Jordan and Yemen, should become more important in a relatively rich economy? The answer to these seeming paradoxes lies in the rapid changes Saudi Arabia is undergoing. Having spent the past ten years there, I had the chance to observe this process first hand. For a start, it is gradually sinking in that the oil boom of the 1970s and 80s is over. Despite last week's good news about higher oil prices, many Saudis are now more convinced than ever that diversification away from the energy sector is vital for sustainable growth. I would certainly agree, particularly since the price of oil is not likely to be much more than ten dollars a barrel over the medium-term, as opposed to the figures of fifteen to eighteen dollars being touted by some optimists. Either way, oil revenues will generally be lower than they were over the past two decades. This in turn means that there will be less money coming into the Saudi Arabia as a whole and the public sector in particular. The latter has traditionally been the engine of Saudi growth, with the state pumping oil out of the ground and money into the economy. This mechanism is now becoming weaker, hence the search by some Saudis for new ways to do business, including tourism.

Calls for change now prevailing in the tourism sector in Saudi Arabia are particularly strong because tourism is an area in its economy which remains largely undevel-

oped. Actually, there is already considerable internal tourism in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the south-western part of the country. Some of the terrain there is mountainous, and in these highlands are cool, green areas attracting many people from the hotter and drier parts of the country.

Efforts aimed at developing tourism in the kingdom were given a boost last week with the government saying it will lend full support to moves in this direction. Policy on tourism was explained by Mecca Governor Prince Majed Ben Abdelaziz while opening a two-day symposium on the development of tourism in Mecca region, promising that the authorities will "listen to what you tell us of the challenges and obstacles that deter the development of tourism in the region and we will work together to overcome these difficulties." The region headed by the prince incorporates the western part of the kingdom and is seat to the holy city of Mecca, the destination of millions each year for pilgrimage. The region also includes Jeddah, Saudi Arabia's commercial hub, and the summer resort city of Taif. A similar position was voiced by Minister of Communications Nasser Al Saloum, who told the gathering of businessmen, corporate executives, government officials and academics that steps should be accelerated to set up an independent body to look after tourism. Symposium papers covered the absence of a clearly defined tourism policy and legislation, the tourist identity of the Mecca region in light of local traditions, the social impact of tourism with emphasis on the employment and training of local manpower, how the local population view and treat visitors from outside, and financing investments in this sector. The speakers lamented the poor state of the Saudi tourism industry in terms of the money spent inside the country, revenues generated, job creation, the condition of facilities, and the degree of awareness among the population. One speaker noted that in 1997 income generated from domestic tourism did not exceed \$400 million, against \$8 billion spent by Saudis outside the country.

## Developing World



Riad al Khouri

Other signs of change in the Saudi economy came in a workshop on SMEs held in Riyadh last week. Organised by the country's Ministry of Finance and National Economy in conjunction with the World Bank, it included a paper presented by Dr. Mohammad Abdelkarim Sulayman, head of Research and Studies at the country's Manpower Council. In it, he talked about the need to support SMEs to boost Saudi national employment. He lamented SMEs being "the main factor causing structural disequilibrium in the labour market" in Saudi Arabia, "due to their small capital and low wages" which do not help to absorb national manpower.

Instead, poorer SMEs encourage the recruitment of foreign workers, thus exacerbating the country's labour market problems. Such talk of employment issues and SMEs was rare only a few years ago, and is further proof of the changes in the Saudi economy.

That SMEs, tourism, and other issues are being aired in Saudi Arabia today is a good sign. Saudi officialdom is becoming more sophisticated at dealing with the kingdom's coming changes, and this makes me and many other observers of the regional economy more optimistic. Saudi Arabia is still by far the biggest Arab economy, and sustainable Saudi development is good news for the country's poorer neighbours in places like Yemen and Jordan, as well as for the rest of the Middle East.

## Letters to the editor

## Unfortunate opinions

WITH REGARD to the strange editorial "Dilly-dallying again" (JT, March 23rd), we have to point out that for almost one year the bombing of our country and attack on our motherland by NATO has been strongly advocated in these unsigned comments of your newspaper.

Of course, we do understand and respect the freedom of expression. And, we do not ask anybody to support our cause or to have the same opinion. We also do understand that some people in the world dislike our motherland and us.

So, we do not challenge your positions and attitudes, nor would we like to change them.

Despite that, it is really very difficult for us to understand what reasons and motives you have for such unfriendly, biased, militaristic and partial opinion on the issue of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Kosovo and Metohija.

In fact, we know — you are surely motivated by firm principles, the fight for human rights and deep concern for NATO credibility.

It is not important that you are advocating the bombardment and military attack on an independent and sovereign country, a member of the United Nations and the European Organisation for Security and Cooperation.

Besides, you completely neglect that any such action would be clear aggression (prohibited by international law) and in direct contravention with the U.N. Charter. Let us just remind you that similar assessment about NATO threats and aggression was said a few days ago by Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of United Nations (which, of course, you did not publish).

And, by the way, we are very keen to reach a political settlement for our province of Kosovo and Metohija. Be sure that nobody in the world would like to see peace in Kosovo and Metohija more than us Yugoslavs.

But, could anyone claim the same determination in that direction by some Western countries that are clearly supporting separatists and terrorists in Kosovo and Metohija? It is very clear to most of the people in the world that the only goal of this game is occupation of part of Yugoslav soil by NATO forces.

Nevertheless, we are very, very sorry that you are expressing such opinions against peace and future.

Fortunately, only few people share your opinions since most people are aware of the dangerous consequences military intervention and so called democratic bombardments could pose for all humanity and our future.

Press Department  
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

## Bring the right change

THIS MORNING I arrived at Muntaz Post with some documents for Germany. When I entered, there were three clerks having tea; there were no customers. (This says something about Muntaz Post.) The postage on my parcel was JD24 I gave the clerk JD30. I was immediately asked for exact money. When I told the clerk that the Post Office should have change, I was told by one of the other clerks sipping her tea that "This is not a bank." I have had a similar experience when attempting to buy a JD6 ticket with JD10 at JETT Bus.

The Jordanian government continues to tout its desire to make Jordan business friendly, yet its employees cannot even master the very simple service of putting aside the amount of small change needed to serve the government's customers. When American and European colleagues ask me about the business climate in Jordan, I'm afraid I answer them with the old saying: "Talk is cheap!"

James L. Gillespie  
Amman  
aimig@joinet.com.jo

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.



## Burning questions

Hundreds of people have fallen ill following a plane crash in Amsterdam six years ago. They insist there's a connection

By Thomas Sancton

WHILE WAITING for an elevator in his suburban Amsterdam apartment building on Oct. 4, 1992, Kamal Mohammad heard a noise — "like an earthquake and a volcano" — that made him think "the end of the world" had come. It was, in fact, the end of the world as he knew it. An El Al cargo jet had just ploughed into the 10-story structure, killing 43 people and igniting an inferno that covered the Bijlmer district with a cloud of black smoke. Since then, Mohammad, a 36-year-old Egyptian immigrant, has been plagued by mysterious ailments: stomach problems, breathing trouble, depression, joint pain and fatigue. "Before the crash," says Mohammad, "I was completely healthy, I was a sportsman. Then suddenly you know that all these things are over."

Dineke Klanke remembers, too. The 39-year-old former fire department volunteer was called to the crash scene to look for bodies, survivors and debris. Today she can no longer work because of the fatigue, pains, respiratory problems and high blood pressure that developed within a year of the accident. Ineke Douwes, 49, raced back to her Bijlmer apartment an hour after she heard about the crash. Her building was spared, but she later suffered a heart attack and developed lung and breast cancer.

Mohammad, Klanke and Douwes are among the hundreds of Bijlmer residents and rescue workers who have come down with unexplained illnesses that they believe were caused

by the burning plane and its cargo. In what has become a Dutch version of Gulf War syndrome, many sick people are seeking answers from a government they claim has been stonewalling them. Doctors suspect that several hundred of these cases may be crash-related, but until there is a comprehensive examination of these sick people and a full accounting of what was aboard the plane, the link is impossible to verify. Belatedly seeking answers to these questions, parliament last November began an investigation into the crash and its aftermath. Now in its final phase, the probe ended last week and is due to publish an official report later this month.

The basic facts surrounding the accident are not in dispute. The Boeing 747-200F, carrying three crew, one non-commercial passenger and 114 tonnes of freight, took off from Amsterdam's Schiphol airport at 6:21 p.m. en route to Tel Aviv. Seven minutes later, both starboard engines ripped loose from the wing. The pilot circled back towards the airport to attempt an emergency landing, but the crippled craft came down in the predominantly immigrant neighbourhood of Bijlmer, 13 km east of Schiphol. In an October 1994 report, the Netherlands Aviation Safety Board blamed the crash on mechanical failure due to faulty engine mountings.

But if the cause now seems clear, troubling questions remain. The case has all the elements of classic conspiracy theory: a missing cockpit voice recorder, incomplete cargo records, depleted uranium used as

ballast, unconfirmed accounts of mysterious figures in white protective clothing combing through the wreckage and persistent rumours that all the sniffer dogs used by emergency workers were dead within six months. El Al spokesman Nachman Klieman dismisses "all the doubts and the conspiracy theories" and claims that the airline has "answered all the questions."

Last month, parliamentary investigators heard a phone conversation taped half an hour after the crash in which an El Al official told a Dutch air traffic controller that the flight had contained explosives, flammable materials and toxic gases. At the Israeli's urging, the controller promised not to make the information public. Prime Minister Wim Kok, who says he "nearly fell out of [his] chair" when he learned of the exchange, immediately moved to suspend the three controllers on duty that night.

The El Al official, Herman Aaij, now says that he had misread his documents; that the explosives he referred to had been legally shipped from New York but were off-loaded during the flight's Amsterdam stopover. As for the "flammable material," El Al says it was perfume. Nonetheless, the tape led some observers, perhaps unfairly, to believe that Israeli and Dutch officials had conspired in a cover-up. El Al, in fact, has long enjoyed a "special relationship" with Schiphol, its European hub, whose officials have been tolerant of cargo shipments that do not always follow standard procedures.

Despite their close ties to the Jewish

*'The case has all the elements of classic conspiracy theory: a missing cockpit voice recorder, incomplete cargo records, depleted uranium used as ballast, unconfirmed accounts of mysterious figures in white protective clothing combing through the wreckage and persistent rumours that all the sniffer dogs used by emergency workers were dead within six months'*

state, Dutch officials have sharply criticised the Israelis for withholding information. "As a friend of Israel, I am extremely disappointed," former Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers told the investigators last week. "It is incomprehensible that they did not inform us" about the complete contents of the plane.

El Al certainly seems to have been guilty of foot dragging. It was only last month that the airline provided the missing paperwork on 20 tonnes of cargo that was shipped by an Israeli-owned freight forwarder in New York. The Dutch government is now studying the freight manifest. El Al had previously confirmed that the plane's cargo included 190 liners of DMMP, a primary ingredient of the deadly sarin nerve gas, which was en route to a top-secret Israeli facility believed to specialise in biological and chemical arms research. Israeli officials say the substance was to have been used to test gas mask filters. The DMMP was transported legally and, according to Jan Medema, who heads the toxic compounds division of a Dutch government-funded scientific research institute, posed no particular health hazard in itself.

But such reassurances have not satisfied the sick Bijlmer residents and their lawyers. "There are some illnesses the experts cannot explain, so I think there is something going on," says Bob van der Goen, who represents some 400 people seeking compensation from Boeing and El Al for crash-related maladies. (The two companies have already paid out about \$50 million for damages linked

directly to the accident). Dr. Nizaar Makdoembaks, a local physician, reports up to four-fold increases in certain illnesses since 1993, including skin problems, auto-immune diseases and genetic defects. "Some rare diseases are now very common here," he says.

Echoing the sentiments of many Bijlmer residents, Makdoembaks believes that authorities have been slow to respond because the victims are mostly poor immigrants. "If the crash was in the centre of Amsterdam," he asserts, "within one year you would have had an investigation like we have here now." Tara Singh Varma, a Green Left legislator and a member of the parliamentary investigating committee, also has deep concerns. "I'm worried about a government which for five years hears that people are ill and doesn't do anything. For me, that's a government that you have to be ashamed of."

In the face of such criticism, Health Minister Els Borst has announced that the government will start systematically examining people next month to see if their illnesses can be linked to the crash. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Annemarie Jollesma, who served as transport minister shortly after the disaster, has promised to resign if the probe shows any mismanagement on her part. Though the final report seems likely to fault the authorities for negligence and not for any cover-up, public trust in government may well be added to the casualty list.

—Time

## NATO launches air strikes against Yugoslavia

(Continued from page 1)

Local media said Pristina airport, an aircraft factory at Pancevo outside Belgrade and a car and weapons factory in the central Serbian city of Kragujevac had all been hit.

In Montenegro, an army military barracks in Danilovgrad was in flames after being hit.

Explosions also were heard in the area of Novi Sad in northern Serbia, northwest of Belgrade.

U.S. defence officials said warships and B-52 bombers had struck at air defence targets including missile batteries, radar and military communications sites inside and outside Kosovo.

Tomahawk missiles with

455 kg warheads were launched from ships in the Mediterranean and Adriatic, and more powerful missiles with 2,000-pound warheads were unleashed from B-52 bombers flying from a base in Britain, the officials said.

About 80 warplanes flew from NATO's Aviano air base in northeastern Italy, witnesses said.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said their aircraft had also taken part. It was Germany's first offensive armed action since World War II.

Clinton said the action had three objectives: to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's opposition to aggression and its support for peace; to deter

Milosevic from escalating attacks on civilians; and, if necessary, to damage Serbia's capacity to wage war in the future.

Western allies said the door was open at any time for Milosevic to accept the Kosovo deal.

"One phone call from Milosevic would be enough," German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said at the European Union summit in Berlin.

Bui Yugoslavia was defiant. "We are innocent, we have a right to protect our country, we have a right to defend our borders," Deputy Prime Minister Vuk Draskovic told Britain's Channel Four television.

The Vatican called the strikes a "defeat for humanity."

Before the attacks began, Milosevic defended his rejection of the West's plan for Kosovo, which included sending 28,000 NATO-led peace-keeping troops there.

"The only right decision was to reject foreign troops on our territory," he said in a television address. "We shall defend the country if it is attacked."

Fighting raged in several Kosovo villages on Wednesday despite the looming threat of air strikes. Serb tanks fired volley after volley into areas near Kosovo's southern border with Macedonia, and Associated Press television news journalists saw about 100 houses ablaze in three devastated villages close to the border.

der.

An estimated 40,000 Yugoslav army and Serbian police forces are in Kosovo, pursuing the massive crackdown launched in February 1998 to try to crush ethnic Albanian rebels.

Yugoslavia — which has lost four of its pre-1990 republics to ethnic breakaways and consists only of Serbia and smaller Montenegro — sees Kosovo as the birthplace of Serb nationhood.

Arrayed against it is the power of the United States and most of its European allies. Experts and officials say the first strikes could be followed by sustained bombing of forces that might be used against Kosovo's Albanian separatist guerrillas.

## Bumpers and hard disks

By Jean-Claude Elias

chip talk

EVER SINCE they were introduced some twenty years ago, personal computers have been compared to cars. At first sight the two types of machines have very little in common. The size, the shape, the functionality, all the physical characteristics are drastically different. And yet, there are so many aspects they share.

A lot has been said and written about the above analogy. I for one have often used the comparison in this very column. I even thought I had gone a little too far in that direction and lately gave up the idea. Now, however, two extremely important people recently brought it up again, namely Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates and General Motors Chairman John F. Smith Jr.

Gates told the press that, had cars followed the same path as PCs, an automobile would now cost a couple of dollars only. To this Smith replied that it's fortunate

they didn't because nobody would want a car that would break down so often, without warning and for no apparent reason. He insisted, rightly so, that cars are definitely more reliable than personal computers.

Whatever the argument, the car-computer analogy is more valid than ever.

Many people, men more often than women, worship their PC like some fall in love with their car. Psychologically speaking, the power transfer phenomenon is perfectly applicable here. Although they give the owner-user different types of power, automobiles and PCs make people feel great, powerful, and in full control. When two friends sit before a computer for an Internet browsing session, you can hear one asking the other "who drives, me or you?"

Megahertz and horsepower bestow a similar feeling of greatness. You never have enough of them, even if you're not exactly sure why you need all this power. Eight-cylinder engines and large capacity hard disks are both terribly macho elements. A modern man pampers his PC just like his car. He buys it accessories, options and all the not-so-useful gadgets he can find. Give high-octane fuel for your automobile and trendy UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) for your computer. But more importantly, both machines are social phenomena with far reaching, dramatic consequences. Cars have already shaped our lives, and personal computers are doing so now. They are the two most important technological achievements of this century.

Jean-Claude Elias can be reached by e-mail at [jean-claude@nets.com.jo](mailto:jean-claude@nets.com.jo)

## Israel announces plan to tighten hold on Jerusalem

(Continued from page 1)

The meeting then approved the development plan for Jerusalem, expected to cost \$49.5 million already allocated to the city in the 1999 state budget plus an additional \$18.75 million agreed on Wednesday.

The plan calls for building 120,000 new housing units for Jews in Jerusalem over the next 20 years, more than doubling its current Jewish population of 425,000.

Between 180,000 and 200,000 Palestinians live in Arab east Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in 1967 and later illegally annexed as part of its "eternal capital."

The cabinet also announced the creation of a special commission to oversee infrastructure improvements in east Jerusalem to bring that sector's dilapidated services up to the level of those in Jewish west Jerusalem, officials said.

Finally the plan will annex 3,500 hectares of land from communities west of Jerusalem to the municipality in a further effort to expand the city's Jewish population. Netanyahu is lagging behind Barak in opinion polls and has decided to focus his campaign on accusations that the

Labour leader will cave in to the Palestinians in negotiations on the final status of Palestinian areas, including Arab east Jerusalem.

Netanyahu's Likud Party ran newspaper ads this week quoting a remark Barak made when he served as foreign minister in 1996 citing Israel's obligation under interim peace accords with the Palestinians to negotiate Jerusalem's status.

Barak's campaign team fired back that in the same 1996 comments Barak insisted that all of Jerusalem must remain under Israeli sovereignty, a point also made in his election platform.

Netanyahu's effort to highlight his tough stance on Jerusalem was undermined Wednesday when the Haaretz newspaper published the contents of a secret service report stating that the Palestinian National Authority had significantly increased its activities in east Jerusalem under the current government.

Netanyahu claims to have halted such activities, which are prohibited under the Oslo accords, in contrast to what he alleges was laxity on the issue by the previous Labour government.

## Rawabdeh meets with council

(Continued from page 1)

"The professional unions are encountering numerous problems and we intend to discuss with each separately its own problems to find solutions to most, if not all, the problems," he added.

Describing the meeting with the prime minister as positive, the council's chairman, Basel Dajani, said: "We highly appreciate the prime minister's views about the unions, and this is what we wanted to see from former successive governments. We also appreciate his decision to open the door for closer cooperation with the professional unions."

According to Dajani, the council members exchanged views with the prime minister on various topics of concern to the unions as well as national issues.

"We clarified our position

with regard to these issues and the prime minister understood our views, and we found the door is open now to have direct contact with him any time problems crop up," Dajani added.

"The prime minister has promised that he will hold a series of meetings with the unions attended by the concerned ministers," said Dajani.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Prime Minister Marwan Hmoud, Health Minister Ishaq Maraga and Public Works and Housing Minister Hosni Abu Gheida.

Rawabdeh's meeting with the leaders of the 13 professional associations preceded talks scheduled for Thursday with political parties.

The leaders of Jordan's 20 political parties told the Jordan Times earlier this week that they will ask the new government to amend the

controversial press and elections laws, halt the privatisation process, which they fear will result in thousands of lay-offs, and stop normalisation of ties with Israel, while intensifying inter-Arab cooperation.

The professional associations and political parties have long expressed disappointment and frustration with what they consider insufficient democratic reforms and lack of sincere government recognition of their role in decision- and policy-making.

A "national dialogue" called for by HRH Prince Hassan following the opposition's boycott of the 1997 general elections failed to take off due to the inability of successive governments and the opposition to reach an agreement on the agenda and mechanisms of the proposed dialogue.

## U.S. disputes Israeli charge PNA harbouring killers of Americans

(Continued from page 1)

In both instances the charges were made in press releases issued shortly before PNA President Yasser Arafat was due to meet in Washington with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The two men met Tuesday at the White House.

A U.S. diplomat strongly criticised Israel on Wednesday for making its allegations in press releases rather than through official channels.

"The constant release of

the names of suspected criminals will compromise the future prosecution of the killers of Americans," said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He complained that Israel's publishing of the

names of terrorist suspects simply sends the fugitives deeper into hiding.

"The United States is especially concerned that such information will undermine the search for these suspects," he said. Netanyahu has used his

allegations that Arafat is not acting against terrorism to justify his government's decision in December to suspend implementation of the U.S.-brokered Wye River peace accord with the Palestinians.

The accord should have

led Israel to withdraw from an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank and release 750 Palestinian prisoners from its jail. But Netanyahu froze the deal after handing over only two per cent of the territory and freeing 250 detainees.

## Sudan Islamists charged with harassing Christians

KHARTOUM (AP) — A group of 40 Islamists have been charged with disturbing peace and gathering illegally in front of a church in the capital, Khartoum, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

Al Rai Al Am newspaper said the group gathered in a square near the church Sunday with the aim of propagating Islam, but police intervened after receiving a complaint from the church.

They were arrested and released on personal guarantee pending a trial. No date has been set.

It quoted Abdul Jabbar Osman Marai, an official at the social planning ministry in charge of church affairs, as saying the incident was "aimed at creating civilian strife." It gave no other details.

Government or church officials were not immediately available for comment.

Sudan's Christian and animist rebels have been fighting for autonomy in southern Sudan since 1983 with the Arab and Islamic

government in the north. But clashes between Christians and Muslims in the north are rare.

More than 1.9 million people have died in the 16-year civil war, many of them in famines caused by the fighting.



# Drivers of oil tankers say government measures causing them more hardships

By Saad G. Hatat

AMMAN — Drivers of roughly 2,000 oil tankers Wednesday lodged a complaint with His Majesty King Abdullah, in which they argued that low transportation tariffs and tonnage from Iraq were driving them bankrupt.

In a memo to the King and Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh, the drivers called for hiking the standard tonnage to 30 tonnes as well as raising the tariffs.

They complained that the oil transport business systematically deteriorated over the past five years due to what they dubbed as "continued government meddling."

"Around ten thousand people depend in their

livelihood on the oil transport sector and with uncalculated government decisions they are nearing the poverty line," noted the memo a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times.

The memo solicited the King's support in response to the Ministry of Transport regulations which further slashed the tankers' tonnage, as of April 1.

The ministry cited a drive to preserve roads by avoiding heavy truck loads, as the reasons behind the new decision.

"The decision was taken without appropriate studies on the ground," added the memo. "It is bound to undermine the whole sector, already facing dire hardships."

Under those conditions, a

two-week shipment of oil from Iraq earns no more than JD150, less than the operational expenses, to haul one truck load between the two destinations.

"Our problem could be solved if the ministry hiked the tonnage to 30 tonnes and raised the tariff," now set at less than JD10 per tonne.

Slashing the tonnage will entail extra expenses on truck drivers, since they will have to minimize the tanker's volume down from 30 tonnes.

Currently, the fleet of around 2,000 oil tankers provides Jordan with nearly 100,000 barrels of Iraqi oil per day.

Under a permission from the United Nations Sanctions Committee, Jordan

imported 4.8 million tonnes of oil from Iraq in 1998.

The memo said that drivers expanded their respective tankers to carry up to 50 tonnes, during the U.N.-Iraq crisis, defused by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in Feb. 1998.

They headed a government call then in a bid to raise oil reserve quantities in the event of a de facto halt to the provision of Iraqi oil to Jordan.

To meet the new regulations, to be effective as of April 1, the drivers will have to cut down again the size of their tankers.

They have to pay extra expenses to cover this inevitable measure since unfilled tankers pose hazardous threats particularly on winding roads.

Tanker drivers are yet to

face another major setback should the government proceed with joint plans to lay down oil pipelines from Iraq to the refinery at Zarqa.

"Such a plan, estimated initially at \$900 million could further deteriorate our sector," one driver told the Jordan Times.

This already perilous sector witnessed the death of at least ten drivers when their tankers were bombed by allied jetfighters during the Gulf war (Feb. 1991).

The 2,000 drivers now risk joining the semi-idle land transport fleet of nearly 15,000 trucks, hit hard by the stagnation of the Red Sea Port of Aqaba, Jordan's main sea outlet, and Iraq's principal maritime outlet prior to the Gulf crisis.

## Exchange Rates

Wednesday, 24-03-99

ACCESS 4646868

CURRENCY	JORDAN DINAR	SAUDI RIAL	QATAR RIAL	BAHRAIN DINAR	OMAN RIAL	QATAR RIAL	OMAN RIAL	OMAN RIAL	OMAN RIAL
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1858	0.1927	1.8780	1.8381	0.1945	2.3115	0.2377	0.7282
BAHRAIN DINAR	4.2977	1.0000	1.0209	9.9491	9.7411	1.0322	12.3455	1.1252	3.7508
OMAN RIAL	5.1893	0.5795	1.0000	8.7454	9.5416	1.0091	11.9945	1.0787	3.6740
QATAR RIAL	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.9781	0.1035	1.2308	0.1106	0.3770
OMAN RIAL	0.5435	0.1007	0.1048	1.0214	1.0000	0.1058	1.2871	0.1130	0.3851
QATAR RIAL	5.1427	0.5707	0.5910	9.8378	9.4569	1.0200	11.8870	1.0684	3.6410
KUWAIT DINAR	0.4328	0.0817	0.0834	0.8125	0.7955	0.0841	1.0000	0.0939	0.3063
OMAN RIAL	4.6136	0.5065	0.5275	8.0388	8.8528	0.5362	11.1253	1.0000	3.4282
OMAN RIAL	21.2288	4.0071	4.0509	39.8574	39.0339	4.1250	49.2635	4.4702	15.0300
OMAN RIAL	1.4124	0.2665	0.2722	2.6525	2.5971	0.2678	3.2646	0.2934	1.0000
OMAN RIAL	0.8628	0.1638	0.1662	1.6200	1.5851	0.1677	1.9939	0.1792	0.5752
OMAN RIAL	2.5298	0.4768	0.4889	4.7448	4.6255	0.4813	5.9400	0.5355	1.8888
OMAN RIAL	2.0565	0.3882	0.3963	3.8521	3.7813	0.3959	4.8478	1.0000	3.4282
OMAN RIAL	8.4730	1.5994	1.6328	15.9122	15.5795	1.6478	19.5850	1.7622	5.9989
OMAN RIAL	1.6378	0.3129	0.3195	3.1133	3.0482	0.3224	2.6319	0.3444	1.1737
OMAN RIAL	2.6408	0.5373	0.5488	5.3459	5.2341	0.5358	6.5739	0.5914	2.0054
OMAN RIAL	11.5800	2.1277	2.2035	21.7658	21.5107	2.2037	26.7897	2.4075	8.2057
OMAN RIAL	25.0118	4.7212	4.8109	48.5714	48.8694	4.8536	57.8123	5.1951	17.7082
OMAN RIAL	52.1102	9.8363	10.0419	97.8521	95.8161	10.1329	120.4535	10.8257	36.8940
OMAN RIAL	2.2111	0.4174	0.4281	4.1523	4.0655	0.4289	5.1008	0.4533	1.5464
OMAN RIAL	4.1835	0.7918	0.8081	7.8753	7.7107	0.8154	9.8931	0.8737	2.9820
OMAN RIAL	0.7918	0.1419	0.1448	1.4114	1.3819	0.1461	1.7372	0.1561	0.5321
OMAN RIAL	17.7737	3.3550	3.4251	33.3788	32.6810	3.4561	41.3833	3.6324	12.5838
OMAN RIAL	2.1292	0.4019	0.4103	3.9987	3.9181	0.4140	4.9216	0.4423	1.5075
OMAN RIAL	1.2915	0.2438	0.2489	2.4285	2.3748	0.2511	2.9857	0.2683	0.9044

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	EURO	SWISS FRANC	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	ITALY LIRA	NETHERLAND GILDER	SPAIN PESA	UNITED KINGDOM POUND
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.6374	0.5950	0.8688	0.1957	2.8522	2.4962	5.6471	1.0396
EURO	0.6107	1.0000	0.3414	0.1195	0.1018	2.5223	0.5335	3.4468	0.9369
SWISS FRANC	1.7888	2.9290	1.0000	1.2266	0.2592	5.4411	0.8876	12.1075	1.5602
GERMAN MARK	1.4580	2.3841	0.8140	1.0000	0.2437	2.3625	0.7224	3.7227	1.5823
FRANCE FRANC	5.8959	9.6228	3.3508	4.1251	1.0000	5.1111	2.9765	33.8764	6.5504
NETHERLAND GILDER	117.3700	192.1188	65.8138	80.6113	18.5653	1.0000	59.2366	665.8023	129.3680
SPAIN PESA	201.54	3.3000	1.1267	1.3642	0.3360	1.7171	1.0000	11.3812	2.2942
UNITED KINGDOM POUND	8.2057	13.4360	4.5873	5.9356	1.3679	5.9913	0.9115	48.1628	9.7828
ITALY LIRA	17.7082	28.8954	8.8885	12.1622	2.9578	1.0000	13.3638	208.3442	40.3473
NETHERLAND GILDER	36.8940	60.4102	20.6250	26.3393	8.1551	31.4338	16.3260	208.3442	40.3473
AUSTRIA SELLING	1.554	2.5652	0.8754	1.0752	0.2510	1.3323	0.7077	8.8422	1.7127
NETHERLAND GILDER	2.9890	4.8514	1.6598	2.0391	0.4949	2.3299	1.4732	16.1667	3.2468
CYPRUS POUND	0.5521	0.9713	0.2875	0.3855	0.0987	0.4534	0.2540	7.0048	0.9819
AUSTRIA SELLING	12.5838	20.5047	7.0348	8.8427	2.0977	10.7215	6.2438	11.3523	13.7816
CANADA DOLLAR	1.5075	2.4884	0.8427	1.0354	0.2513	2.3844	0.7488	8.8422	1.7127
EURO	0.6144	1.4873	0.5112	0.6780	0.1524	2.7791	0.4537	5.1538	1.0000

## MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	EURO	SWISS FRANC	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	ITALY LIRA	NETHERLAND GILDER	SPAIN PESA	UNITED KINGDOM POUND
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.6374	0.5950	0.8688	0.1957	2.8522	2.4962	5.6471	1.0396
EURO	0.6107	1.0000	0.3414	0.1195	0.1018	2.5223	0.5335	3.4468	0.9369
SWISS FRANC	1.7888	2.9290	1.0000	1.2266	0.2592	5.4411	0.8876	12.1075	1.5602
GERMAN MARK	1.4580	2.3841	0.8140	1.0000	0.2437	2.3625	0.7224	3.7227	1.5823
FRANCE FRANC	5.8959	9.6228	3.3508	4.1251	1.0000	5.1111	2.9765	33.8764	6.5504
NETHERLAND GILDER	117.3700	192.1188	65.8138	80.6113	18.5653	1.0000	59.2366	665.8023	129.3680
SPAIN PESA	201.54	3.3000	1.1267	1.3642	0.3360	1.7171	1.0000	11.3812	2.2942
UNITED KINGDOM POUND	8.2057	13.4360	4.5873	5.9356	1.3679	5.9913	0.9115	48.1628	9.7828
ITALY LIRA	17.7082	28.8954	8.8885	12.1622	2.9578	1.0000	13.3638	208.3442	40.3473
NETHERLAND GILDER	36.8940	60.4102	20.6250	26.3393	8.1551	31.4338	16.3260	208.3442	40.3473
AUSTRIA SELLING	1.554	2.5652	0.8754	1.0752	0.2510	1.3323	0.7077	8.8422	1.7127
NETHERLAND GILDER	2.9890	4.8514	1.6598	2.0391	0.4949	2.3299	1.4732	16.1667	3.2468
CYPRUS POUND	0.5521	0.9713	0.2875	0.3855	0.0987	0.4534	0.2540	7.0048	0.9819
AUSTRIA SELLING	12.5838	20.5047	7.0348	8.8427	2.0977	10.7215	6.2438	11.3523	13.7816
CANADA DOLLAR	1.5075	2.4884	0.8427	1.0354	0.2513	2.3844	0.7488	8.8422	1.7127
EURO	0.6144	1.4873	0.5112	0.6780	0.1524	2.7791	0.4537	5.1538	1.0000

## CENTRAL BANK BULLETIN

CURRENCY	ASK	BID
US DOLLAR	0.7120	0.7120
EURO	1.1634	1.1634
GERMAN MARK	0.3944	0.3944
SWISS FRANC	1.5823	1.5823
FRANCE FRANC	6.5504	6.5504
JAPAN YEN	0.0014	0.0014
HOLLAND GILDER	0.0010	0.0010
ITALY LIRA	0.0000	0.0000
EURO	0.7114	0.7114

## WORLD STOCK MARKETS

STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST	CHANGE
FRANKFURT	DAX	4918.03	1527.09	-117.03
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	10711.34	11041.01	-329.67
LONDON	FT-SE 100	6060.90	6152.80	-92.30
NEW YORK	DJ INDEX	9671.83	9850.31	-178.48
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	599.45	610.49	-15.04
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	703.31	717.35	-14.05
NEW YORK	S&P 500	1282.14	1287.01	-4.87
TOKYO	Nikkei-225	15615.47	16019.10	-403.63
PARIS	CAC 40	4779.47	4157.05	-117.55

## PRECIOUS METALS

METAL	ASK	BID
GOLD	384.10	384.50
SILVER	5.26	5.11
PLATINUM	373.50	375.80

## HAPPY EID \*\* HAPPY EID \*\* HAPPY EID \*\* HAPPY EID

Family Movie

Gackie Chan/Chris Tucker

Tom Hanks/Meg Ryan



## Israeli strike paralyzes public sector

TEL AVIV (R) — Hundreds of thousands of Israeli public sector workers walked off their jobs on Wednesday in a crippling strike Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called a pre-election attempt to blackmail the government.

Israel's Histadrut federation of trade unions ordered 400,000 workers to stay at home after talks with the treasury broke down over union demands for a 14 per cent wage increase to compensate for 1998 and 1999 inflation.

The strike affected government offices, hospitals, ports, trains and courts. Partial work stoppages hit Bezeq Israel telecom and the Israel Electric Corp.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) If you've noticed that a loved one has been acting a little peculiar lately, maybe you should try to get to the bottom of it. He or she may have misinterpreted a comment that by now you can't even remember making. These things happen. See if you can clean up a misunderstanding.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) One of the things you love is saving money, and you have a friend who's even better at it than you are. The two of you really ought to get together today and share notes. You might even want to start a business. You could become multimillionaires.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) It might be a good idea to have a conversation today with an older person — someone who signs your paychecks or hands out your allowance. There's definitely money involved, and you might be eligible for a little more of it. If you've been doing extra work, make sure the people who should know about it do.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 22) You're calm, cool, relaxed and sophisticated. Besides that, you've got fabulous intuition. It's almost like cheating, because it lets you know

what other people are thinking... sometimes. Today, just to make sure, check it out — by asking.

**LEO:** (July 23 to August 22) Behind-the-scenes negotiations could go well for you today. A mess you've been trying to untangle could get cleared up without any further effort on your part. Someone you've asked to help may finally do just that. Don't be stingy with your praise if that happens.

**VIRGO:** (August 23 to September 22) A situation you thought was going to be a complete mess could finally be getting resolved. It was just a misunderstanding, that's all, but one of those that seems to get worse instead of better. At least until recently. Support someone who can help set things straight.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Looks like something you've been studying has led you to suggest a change at work. This is drawing attention from folks higher up,

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

which could lead to an increase in your income. That's the good news. The bad news is that you may not know quite how to put this suggestion into effect yet, and you might make a mistake. Be careful.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Although you should continue to exercise some caution, of course, it looks like your path is relatively clear right now. In other words, proceed with your plans, but take care. Mercury is still retrograde, and that often creates confusion. Don't let that stop you, but do allow a little extra time.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) On the one hand, you're saving; on the other, you're spending. Hopefully you're making a profit, but it never hurts to have money in the bank as well, even if you have to borrow to buy something you need. The bigger your savings account, the more they're willing to lend you. You might want to talk to somebody about that today.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) The lesson to be learned today is from history, but not necessarily the history you learned in school. The information you got before might not quite be what happened, but today it looks like the facts are coming out, and it's a bit of a surprise. Pay attention. There's something about this lesson you can put to use.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) You're an intellectual, but today there's a slight advantage going to the water signs. That means emotions could carry the day, so if someone is making an emotional argument or a plea to your emotions, or letting emotions get in the way of reason, let that be your cue. Instead of getting mad, watch and listen. You could learn something.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You might need somebody who can listen to your problems, even if you don't feel you express them very well. It's not what you're saying that's important, it's how the other person hears you. And if he or she hears you with love and forgiveness, your anxieties might simply dissolve. It's certainly worth a try.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

## THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Ralph Emerson
- Vamosal
- Small snakes
- From pole to pole
- Clio or Erato
- Actor Connery
- "Leap of Faith" star Winger
- Highland Gaelic
- Fascinated by
- Draft excluder
- Scott Case
- Colorado tribe
- Spooky
- Decompose
- Heaviness
- meas.
- X
- Pompous fool
- Slary
- Author of "The Monk's Wedding"
- Dancing fakir
- Ice fall
- Sagacity
- Mormon abbr.
- Challenged
- Campaign contributor
- Refines ore
- WWII arena
- Old MacDonald's refrain
- New Mexico art colony
- Unwanted lip
- Yam maker
- Leftover for Rover
- Rosary element
- Hal
- attachments
- Naiasse line
- Sailing girl
- Bewildered



## Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Potato chips producers complain of dumping from Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Turkey

\*\* IN A memorandum submitted to the minister of industry and trade, the Zarga Chamber of Industry asked that import of potato chips be stopped to protect the local Jordanian industry. "Permitting imports of chips with full exemption from customs duty and sales tax is a blow to Jordan's chips industry which pays customs through production inputs as well as sales tax," the memorandum said.

The chamber said Jordanian industries that produce chips have sent it a memorandum outlining the hindrances that face their operations and requesting measures to ease their current suffering. The industries asked that regulations be issued, based on the law protecting national production, to achieve fair competition for the national output against imported products which are originally backed in their own countries.

The memorandum submitted by the

industries complained of dumping policies of some types of potato chips imported from Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Turkey.

"The Jordanian market is open for imports of chips from all countries including Lebanon but the Jordanian chips is not allowed to enter the Lebanese market. This is in violation of the basic principles of trade exchange and reciprocal treatment," the memorandum said stressing that the Jordanian chips industry is considered of the most important in terms of the high value added input and deserves to be given all the care.

The Zarga Chamber of Industry recently sent a number of memorandums demanding that imports of biscuits be stopped, especially from Turkey, and that customs be levied in order to support the local industry and enable it to compete (Al Ra'i).

### Irbid industrial chief blames banks for not providing enough information and incentives

\*\* ACCORDING TO Maher Al Nasser, president of the Irbid Chamber of Industry, the studies that banks conduct about the industrial sector are traditional and "as such, banks should find the specialised and qualified personnel to study the needs and the means of financing the sector." He complained that the banks still insist on real estate guarantees when financing the industrial sector and that financing exports is not easily available. Moreover, Al Nasser said there are no banking incentives such as reduced interest rates.

Irbid's industrial chief criticised banks for not providing information about out-

side markets as the case is in other countries. He stressed the importance of cooperation between the government and the banks to provide the necessary financing for the industrial sector at low cost and on easy terms.

Al Nasser complained that commercial bank credits are short-term and usually extended for working capital needs while long-term capital financing is still at a low level compared to the services sector. He concluded by noting that the Central Bank is not quick in providing information about a request for credit risk about a client (Al Dustur).

T. Keenia  
with Lionel  
Richi

2. Keenia  
with  
Bocelli



Keenia

A world class artist and  
a known celebrity is now  
performing at Yesterdays

Legato Band

Now at Yesterdays after  
touring South America.

Dance to Salsa, meringa,  
flamenco, Italian music  
and much more....

## Keenia

The Famous Legato Band



For Reservation Tel: 4654500 / 4654201

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Romance and travel look good today, especially if you're in a committed relationship. That will be better for you financially, too. It'll keep costs down, and that's important.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You might be feeling like it's about time to take action, and you're probably right, but the time is not quite perfect yet. You need to study the situation just a little bit longer. Don't let anyone push you into moving until you're good and ready.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) You're strong and getting stronger. A partnership with a powerful individual could help you achieve your goals more quickly than you'll make it on your own. But don't push too hard for a commitment. A handshake will do for now.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 22) This is a pretty good day to ask for a raise, or to sell something. It looks like people want to give you the money, and it's not just a fluke. Its probably because you've earned it, or because what you have to sell is worth it. Sunday is a better day for romance, however.

**LEO:** (July 23 to August 22) This looks like a marvelous day for you. If you can take it off, by all means do so. Looks like there's something an older person needs done, and if you can figure out what, and get it finished early, maybe you can leave sooner than expected. Also make sure you do something a loved one wants. That's almost even more important.

**VIRGO:** (August 23 to September 22) A person who can't seem to make up his or her mind is just about to drive you nuts, but instead of getting mad, perhaps you can be of some assistance. This is actually harder on the other person than it is on you. Be compassionate, while offering to share your common sense. Some people just don't seem to have enough.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You're getting into a new circle of friends, partially due to your own efforts. You're pushing yourself to learn more, so you're meeting people who already know what you're trying to learn. They're looking at you not only because you're cute, but also because you're trying. Don't worry about being perfect yet. That just causes jealousy.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) You could turn into a conflict of interest today. You're interested in doing things one way, and a person in authority wants to do them another way. You both have strong ideas about what's right and wrong. Working out a compromise will be difficult, but not impossible. And its a good idea, since this person outranks you.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Conditions are starting to look good for travel, although there are still things to be done, as you are no doubt aware. One chore could prevent you leaving this evening. Don't be dismayed if that happens, but don't ignore it, either. You can deal with it now or you can deal with it later, but its smarter to deal with it now.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) If you've been wanting to make some renovations on your home, this could be a good day to begin. Looks like the money you need is available, at a rate you can afford. First, figure out just what you want and how much its going to cost. Then, go shopping for money. You can let your fingers do the walking on that one.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) The moon is going into Leo today, and that should be kind of interesting, especially since its directly opposite your sun sign. It looks like you're going to get a little competition, and that can sometimes be good. It stimulates your creativity, and today, that's important. Something else out there is trying to stifle it.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Looks like your workload is picking up. It might just be your normal end-of-week routine, as you scramble to get everything finished. Do be careful, however. A mistake could cause a delay. A simple error in a mailing address, for example, could send a package to the wrong end of the planet. Check details carefully.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19)

The plans you've carefully made for today may clash with what your sweetheart has in mind. Don't you just hate it when this happens? If you can go separate ways and get together later, that might work out best for all.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You could find yourself in a bit of an argument today. The other person is trying to tell you what to do, or push you around a little, and a little goes quite a long way in this kind of situation. Be nice, but stand your ground.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Looks like you could happen upon a lovers' quarrel today. Its not between you and your sweetheart, thank heaven, but two other people. Stay out of it, if you can. If you want them to take your advice, wait until they ask for it.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 22) You could be doing quite well financially, and you definitely should try. Go to the garage sales, or throw one of your own. Looks like there's money to be made. Romance may be a tad harder to come by. The love is there. Its just difficult to make the connection.

**LEO:** (July 23 to August 22) Although you're in a ram-bunctious mood, other people aren't so happy. Looks like there's a battle going on between two people who care a lot about each other. And if you like them both, you could feel stuck in the middle. Not a good place to be. Don't let their troubles infect your relationship. Maintain your sense of humor.

**VIRGO:** (August 23 to September 22) The competition is tough today. You may decide to stay on the sidelines and be the cheering section instead. Don't get out there to play with the big kids unless you really like to play rough and tumble. And stay out of a lovers' quarrel, too.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You can make friends with just about anyone, but some of your friends lack that ability. They have a tendency to be inflexible in their positions. They can get really stuck in their ways and won't listen to each other. But they might listen to

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

you, and that would be nice, because you could help break up a logjam today.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) This would be a good day to work overtime. Looks like you could make quite a lot of money, as well as a very good impression on someone who needs your services badly. That's a nice position to find yourself in. In other words, its good work if you can get it.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) There are certainly a lot of controversies now, and people feel really strongly about things both ways. You're in a pretty good position to act as moderator, and maybe even judge, and you probably ought to do that, because tempers are short and people need your objective wisdom. You're famous for that, you know.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) The items you want and need are available, and some of them might even be on sale. This could be the moment you've been waiting for. Check out the want ads, the swap meets and the neighbourhood bulletin boards. The perfect product is out there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) If you feel like you're stuck in a big box today, don't blame anyone else. Its partly of your own making, and if you're going to break out of it, you'll be the one who has to do it. Nobody else is going to be able to do it for you, no matter how much you complain. So cheer up and give it a shove.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) The work you do today should be lucrative. The person you're working for could pay you way more than you think you're worth, but you don't need to mention it. You're a nice person, and you don't want to cheat anyone, but truth is probably being paid pretty close to what you should have asked for and didn't.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE

## A LOVE STORY OF STYLE

DAJANI JEWELLERS

Amra Forum Hotel Shops, Amman

**Many villas and apartments for rent and sale**

Furnished & Unfurnished

For more information call:

**Abdoun Real Estate**  
5920605/5920608/079/530007

Web Site is  
[www.abdoun.com.jo](http://www.abdoun.com.jo)

**STUDIO HAIG**

Professional quality in 1 hour service

Develop your colour film at our shop and get:

- \* JUMBO photo size 30% larger.
- \* Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm.

Shmelsani - Opposite Grindlays Bank.  
Phone: 5604042  
Sweifiah Tel: 822891

Your Address In Amman

**CRYSTAL**

Quality Serviced Suites

- \* One & Two Bedrooms \* Fully Equipped Kitchens \* Daily & Long Stay \* Reasonable Rates

5th Circle  
Tel: 5692672 \* Fax: 5674551  
e-mail: [crystal@gom.com.jo](mailto:crystal@gom.com.jo)

**FOR RENT**

Deluxe Villas and Apartments

**SANABEL Real Estate**

**SWEIFYEH**  
A. Hajarat Complex  
Tel: 5864230 - 5865167  
Mobile: 079/537588

**Budget**

Car Rental & Leasing

WE RENT LESS

- DAILY
- WEEKLY
- MONTHLY

Telephone: 962-6-5698131  
Fax: 962-6-5673312  
P.O. Box: 96048  
Amman-11196, Jordan  
E-mail: [budget@go.com.jo](mailto:budget@go.com.jo)  
An Independent Budget System Licensee

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL

5684311 - 5699634 EXT. 42

&

Fax: 5693337

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL

5684311 - 5699634 EXT. 42

&

Fax: 5696183

**Bayerischer Hof**

German Restaurant

OPEN FOR LUNCH & DINNER  
FROM 12:30 P.M. UNTIL 12:30 A.M.

German coffee and cakes served all day

Sweifiah - Al Hamra Street Tel: 5819730 / 5810811  
PO Box 6555, Amman-11118 Jordan

**Amra Forum Hotel**

At 6th Circle  
Tel.: 5510001

**Wadi Rum Bar**

Why not a Cool Beer  
After a Long Day.

your Friendly Host

## poetic licence In STYLE DAJANI JEWELLERS

Amra Forum Hotel Shops, Amman



THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF & WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST IS RECRUITING AT ITS HEADQUARTERS IN AMMAN: Chief, Social Services Division, Grade 20. (VN#HQ 1A) 05/99) Fixed Term Three Years Appointment: (Monthly take home pay ranges from JD1,031 to JD1,587 plus dependency allowance; plus monthly provident fund ranging from JD215 to JD332 payable at the end of service; compulsory medical insurance).

**DUTIES:** The incumbent of this post is the Agency's senior social development professional, reporting directly to the Director of Relief and Social Services, managing a team of social development experts at Headquarters and technically responsible for developmental social welfare programmes and projects implemented by Field staff in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza. The social services programme includes community development and institution building; poverty alleviation; women in development; community-based rehabilitation and integration of persons with disabilities; and family casework. The Chief, Social Service Division is responsible for input into policy formulation; situation analyses and needs assessments; appropriate strategies and specific objectives; technical guidelines for policy implementation; training of social workers and programme managers in the five Field offices; indicators for programme monitoring; and evaluation of programme impact and achievement. She coordinates with other UNWRA programmes and inter-governmental and non-governmental partners in joint social development ventures, and represents the Agency at relevant United Nations and other professional conferences. Administratively, she is responsible for the Office budget, and advises on staffing, logistical and other resource needs.

### QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:

1. Advanced university degree in developmental social welfare, community development or related field, with special emphasis on the application of social work and community participation insight, and methodologies to developmental programmes. 2. Post-graduate training in local institution building and/or poverty alleviation. **Experience:** Ten years' experience in the application of knowledge acquired in (A) above, including: 1. Practical experience in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of one or more of the following sectors: community development and institution-building, poverty alleviation, rehabilitation and integration of the disabled, developmental women's programmes; and in training local counterparts to run such programmes. 2. At least five years in a senior supervisory capacity in a large international, governmental or non-governmental organisation concerned with welfare and promoting developmental social services to socio-economically disadvantaged groups in developing countries. Excellent command of written and spoken English and first-rate communication skills. Working knowledge of spoken and written Arabic a valuable asset. **Other Requirements:** 1. Computer literacy. 2. Good knowledge of the Near East environment and cultures. **Additional Information:** Will be required to travel extensively in the Agency's area of operations.

Candidates are requested to submit a detailed UNWRA Personal History form and recent photograph not later than April 7, 1999 to: UNWRA Headquarters Amman, Attention: Personnel Officer, by Fax No. 5826177 or by hand.

Full consideration will be given to disabled candidates whose disability does not mitigate the effective performance of the duties of the job. Normally many applications are received. Only those applicants in whom the Agency has a further interest will be contacted.

**Jordan Times**  
Tel.

5684311-5699634



# 1997 Pan-Arab Games soccer team to get belated rewards

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — It has been an eventful week for the Jordan Football Association (JFA) whose new board started its mandate with sweeping decisions.

Headed by HRH Prince Ali, the JFA decided in its last meeting to finally hand out the 1997 Pan-Arab Games soccer gold medal team members their rewards amounting to JD26,000 (JD1,000 each).

In addition withheld amounts including JD38,909 for Premier League clubs and JD30,491 in referee fees would also be paid immediately.

The new JFA took over their respective posts with Amman Mayor Nidal Hadid named vice-president, Fadi Zreikat (secretary and spokesman), Suhail Marar (treasurer), Mohammad Jamil Abu Tayyib, Ahmad Armoush, Taleb Ezmeqna, Abdul Rauf Al Tal and Mansour Kardan members.

During the past week, Prince Ali met the outgoing and newly appointed JFA board and also discussed the circumstances leading up to the formation of

the new board with Premier League officials.

Prince Ali's decision to change the board comes after months of speculation regarding a change in the JFA previously headed by His Majesty King Abdullah.

The late ratification of the names by the minister of youth and sports was because not all members of the JFA are appointed, and elected members legally have the right to maintain their seats on the board since they represent their respective clubs.

However, if over half the number of the entire board resigns then the minister has the right to ratify a new board which will be replaced at the end of the original term — following the end of the Olympic Games in 2000.

Therefore, the resignation of the JFA's outgoing board paved the way to the formation of the new board side-stepping any possible friction between clubs after a war of words had recently erupted between the JFA and Al Faisali's board — one of the foremost proponents of a change in the JFA.

During his meeting with officials,

Prince Ali underlined the importance of providing all necessary means of support to Jordanian athletes as the Kingdom prepares to host the Al Hussein Games.

He urged further support and for players to be released from their jobs in order to have more time for training as the national soccer team prepares to retain the Pan-Arab Games gold medal.

Prince Ali said he would work on securing a qualitative leap in Jordanian soccer and stressed the need to emphasise a team spirit to upgrade sports in the country.

The JFA also decided to approve the Olympic team's matches against the Omani team on April 30 and May 2 in preparation for the Sydney Olympic qualifiers. Another match will also be held against the UAE.

The JFA also announced participation in the U-16 and U-19 Asian 2000 qualifiers, and will bid to host the U-16 Championship next year.



Serena Williams of the U.S. pumps her fist after winning a point during her fourth round match against Monica Seles of the U.S. at the Lipton WTA Tennis Championships in Key Biscayne. Williams upset Seles in straight sets 6-2, 6-3 (AFP photo)



Monica Seles of the U.S. reacts after losing a point to Venus Williams of the U.S. during their fourth round match at the Lipton WTA Tennis Championships in Key Biscayne. Williams upset Seles 6-2, 6-3 (AFP photo)

SCOTTISH driver Colin McRae, at the wheels of his Ford Focus during the last stage of the Portugal Rally from Vizo to Celorico de Basto. McRae was holding the lead before the final stage (AFP photo)



## Sampras beaten by Krajicek Serena, Graf, Hingis through

KEY BISCAYNE (AFP) — Pete Sampras was beaten by Dutchman Richard Krajicek here on Tuesday in the quarter-finals of the Lipton tournament.

Krajicek, the seventh seed, beat the American number two seed 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) and will meet France's Jerome Golmard or Sweden's Thomas Enqvist in the semifinal.

The giant 1m96 (6foot 5in) Dutchman, Wimbledon champion in 1996, stopped Sampras' celebrations at regaining the World No. 1 slot from Carlos Moya in his tracks as he reached the semi-finals by scoring his fifth career win over the American in seven encounters.

Sampras was well below his best as he missed returns and volleys he would normally put away in his sleep. After winning the opening game, Sampras then lost the next five on a roll as Krajicek wrapped up the first set in just 25 minutes.

Sampras noose the less rolled his sleeves up in the second set.

He lost his service again in the third game but broke back for what proved the only time in the match.

In the ensuing tie break Sampras went 4-1 in front, but Krajicek, returning to his best after two years blighted by knee problems, fought back furiously to pocket the match on his second match point 8-6.

The Dutchman will next play the winner of the quarter-final clash between Sweden's Thomas Enqvist and Frenchman Jerome Golmard, conqueror of Britain's Tim Henman.

The other two quarterfinals pitting Frenchman Sebastien Grosjean, ouster of Moya, against Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty and Spain's Francisco Claver against Germany's Nicolas Pietrangeli, will take place Wednesday.

In the women's singles, Swiss top seed Martina Hingis reached the quarter-finals of the Lipton Championships after crushing Germany's Marlene Weingartner 6-0, 6-2.



Barbara Schett from Austria eyes the ball before returning a forehand in her match against Anna Kournikova of Russia at the Lipton Championships tennis tournament in Key Biscayne, Florida. Schett defeated Kournikova 6-1, 1-6, 6-1 (AFP photo)



Thomas Enqvist of Sweden hits the ball to Jerome Golmard of France during their fourth round match at the Lipton ATP Tennis Championships in Key Biscayne. Enqvist beat Golmard in straight sets 6-3, 7-5 (AFP photo)

Hingis, who blitzed her opponent in just 48 minutes, next faces either Russian pin-up Anna Kournikova or Austria's Barbara Schett.

Germany's seventh seed Steffi Graf also reached the last eight, overpowering Nathasha Zvereva of Belarus 6-2, 6-4.

Graf next faces either second-seeded American Lindsay Davenport or Russia's Elena Likhovtseva.

Graf was joined in the last eight by South African Amanda Coetzer, whose opponent Mary Pierce was unable to complete the match. Coetzer, seeded ninth, led 6-1, 4-2 when the match was abandoned.

Coetzer will take on the winner of the match between Serena Williams and Monica Seles.

No. 4 seed Jana Novotna, of the Czech Republic, also booked her place in the quarterfinals by beating Pamy Schnyder 6-3, 2-6, 6-2. Novotna will meet the winner of Venus Williams' clash with Germany's Anke Huber.

## Sponsors fast losing faith in Sydney Games organisers

SYDNEY (AFP) — Sydney Olympic sponsors are fast losing faith in the 2000 Games' organisers, saying they believe them to be bureaucrats driven by political influences who fail to meet deadlines.

Leaked copies of Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) research forced organisers to admit Wednesday its reputation had taken a beating by the ongoing Olympic bribery scandals.

"The reputation of the sports and the athletes have remained intact but the reputation of the governing administration of the games has undoubtedly taken a beating," said SOCOG chief executive Sandy Hollway.

"That must be restored if in time the whole enterprise is not to lose public confidence and public interest," SOCOG still needs to raise another A\$218 million (\$137 million) to reach its sponsorship revenue target.

And according to the research, sponsors paying up to A\$60 million (\$37.8 million) for the right to be associated with the Games said they are treated more like benefactors than business partners.

Complaints included lack of a programme to profile products and allow a return on their investment, and a failure by SOCOG to meet deadlines.

More than 70 per cent of the 35 sponsors who responded to the survey agreed that SOCOG was "a large bureaucratic organisation with lots of red tape."

Seventy-two per cent said organisers seemed to be more concerned with solving their own problems than helping sponsors.

Only 18 per cent said they owe felt part of a team, compared to 55 per cent in May last year.

On Tuesday, U.S.-based insurance giant John Hancock Financial Services became the first major sponsor to publicly show its frustration, calling on Australian International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Phil Coles to resign from both the IOC and SOCOG.

"He is damaging the movement worldwide as well as Australia's outstanding efforts to stage what will be an extraordinary games," the company said in a statement.

Hollway's comments to an annual gathering of Games' sponsors in Sydney was received well, with Ansett Australia airline's Olympics general manager Glenn Robertson saying it was a good sign that SOCOG was prepared to act to correct any perception it was arrogant.

This was despite Australia's other IOC member Kevan Gosper telling John Hancock that while its support was valued: "We'll run the sport, you

run your insurance company."

Coles, meanwhile, has again protested his innocence over claims he received jewellery worth \$10,000 from a businessman associated with the Athens 1996 bid committee.

He vowed not to quit the IOC or SOCOG, claiming there was a co-conspiracy against him "by Melbourne business interests" involved in that city's failed bid to win the 1996 Games.

"I do know there's a co-conspiracy involved, we're getting information about that," he told Radio 2UE.

"I can't say more, there's an element of people out to destroy me for other reasons."

Sydney people are also getting tired of hearing about Olympic scandals, with a survey showing many planned to be out of town for the 2000 Games.

Just 18 per cent of those surveyed by the Centre for Visitor Studies said they would like to attend a Games event.

"We hear about the Olympics every day and there can be a saturation point — people are just sick of the Games," said Peter Wilson, research manager at the centre.

"I think these numbers indicate there's hard work to be done by SOCOG."



Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre

CINEMA TEL:463-4144  
PHILADELPHIA '1'

Tom Hanks & Edward Burns...in

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15

CINEMA TEL:463-4144  
PHILADELPHIA '2'

HAPPY EID TO ALL

RONIN  
A LITTLE PRINCESS

Shows: 12:30, 3:30

CINEMA TEL:5699238  
PLAZA

Mil Gibson  
Danny Glover...in  
LETHAL WEAPON

Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Gackie Chan Chris Tucker...in  
RUSH HOUR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00

CINEMA TEL:5677420  
CONCORDE

ALWAD MAHROUS  
BTA' AL WAZIR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORDE 2  
MR. BEAN  
TOM & JERRY

Shows: 12:30, 4:00

CINEMA TEL:5934793  
GALLERIA 1

ABDOUN  
www.cns.com.jo/Galleria

Gackie Chan & Chris Tucker...in  
RUSH HOUR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30

THE MAGIC SWORD

Shows: 5:00

CINEMA TEL:5934793  
GALLERIA 2

ABDOUN  
www.cns.com.jo/Galleria

Tom Hanks & Meg Ryan...in  
YOU'VE GOT M@IL

Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:45

THE MAGIC SWORD

Shows: 12:30, 3:30

Hisham Yanes Theatre  
TEL: 4625155

Starting on the Eid...

the political satire  
AL SALAM AL

Starting at 8:30 p.m.

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.



LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



Iraqi team wins 2 matches

AMMAN — The Iraqi volleyball team will return back home on Thursday after it defeated its Jordanian counterpart 3-1 in a friendly match and took part in a joint training as part of preparation for the Pan-Arab Games, Al Hussein Tournament. The teams held another two friendlies in which Jordan beat Iraq 3-1 after it was defeated 3-0.

Premier League clubs get JD5,000

AMMAN — Minister of Youth and Sports Mohammad Kheir Mamsar on Thursday will receive the presidents of the Premier League's clubs to deliver them JD5,000 for each as aid because of the cancellation of this year's league. Last week, Mamsar announced that Premier League soccer teams would receive a total of JD10,000 since postponing local competitions pending the end of the Pan-Arab Games had deprived them of ticket sales revenue. During the past week the minister also met with officials from Al Wihdat, Al Faisali, Al Hussein, Qadissieh and Amman clubs in separate visits to these clubs.

Olympic team starts preparations

AMMAN — The Jordanian Olympic football team will play a friendly match on Thursday against Al Ahli Club as part of preparation for the Sydney 2000 qualifiers in July against Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The team will also play against the Public Security Department's team on Sunday, and against the Municipality team on Tuesday.

China donates equipment

AMMAN — Jordan will receive tennis-table equipment for the Chinese government to support the national team as part of its preparation for the Pan-Arab Games. The equipment will come under the joint sports cooperation agreements, especially that it has been reported that the national team lacks some necessary requirements such as tables.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib

# 9th Pan-Arab Games — Al Hussein Tournament

## Zarqa might not host any event; rehearsals begin for opening ceremony

By Aileen Bannayau

AMMAN — Officials from the Ministry of Education representing Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa governorates have been reviewing plans to stage the opening ceremony of the 9th Pan-Arab Games.

Minister of Education Izzat Jaradat told a meeting Tuesday that time was short but a concerted effort by all would enable the Kingdom to stage the last Games of the century in a manner that would make it a success and worthy of carrying the name — Al Hussein Tournament — in memory of the late King Hussein who passed away on Feb. 7 after a long battle with cancer.

Officials said rehearsals for the opening programme had started and involved students from various schools. Final rehearsals will be held at Amman International Stadium in July.

A French expert who was in charge of opening and closing ceremonies during the 1998 World Cup has been contracted to provide expertise at a cost of JD250,000.

Meanwhile, it was announced Wednesday that the city of Zarqa, which was slated to host some of the events of the Games, would not have that chance to host any after the municipality rented out the 5,000-seat hall to commercial companies for three years.

Bodybuilding, weightlifting, table tennis, boxing, and wrestling events could have been held at the hall.

Moreover, rulling out the track at the Prince Mohammad Sports City also seems to have scrapped the chance of Zarqa hosting any event. Last week Minister of Sports and

Youth Mohammad Kheir Mamsar told the sports media that preparing for the Pan-Arab Games was a challenge for all Jordanians and noted that all efforts would be mobilised to finish facilities on time and be ready for the event.

The minister said the two pressing issues now were the competitive level of the Kingdom's teams and acquiring equipment to upgrade facilities with electronic timing machines and other requirements since apart from gymnastics, no equipment has been ordered from abroad yet.

Mamsar noted that the Higher Organising Committee (HOC) headed by HRH Prince Faisal, was determined that medal winners would receive prizes and rewards that had never been offered before.

Over 3,500 athletes were slated to take part in 26 events (compared to 19 events in 20 sports in the 1997 Beirut Games) and the HOC announced that no event will be cancelled even if the number of competing teams is less than the minimum required.

There are 10 compulsory games for men and optional ones which the host country could add. The compulsory events are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, soccer, wrestling, weightlifting and cycling. Optional ones include squash, taekwondo and karate.

The eight compulsory games for women are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, taekwondo and karate.

Seventeen countries have confirmed participation and the organisers were awaiting word from Bahrain and the UAE. The only Arab countries not taking part were Somalia, Djibouti and the



Comoros Islands.

The participating countries are, in addition to the host, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Kuwait, Qatar, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Sudan and Palestine. Oman and Lebanon have not finalised the nature of their participation.

The official countdown will begin on May 15 when most of construction work is expected to be completed including maintenance at various venues.

Officials say construction of various venues is on schedule, mainly the JD4 million multi-purpose indoor stadium with a 7,000-seat capacity, the Olympic-size swimming pool, and maintenance work on the track and field stadium.

Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) officials have expressed concern that a host of administrative and organisational issues seem to have overshadowed the lax attitude of some federations overseeing the training of athletes — a key priority as host country. The last regional event Jordan

took part in was the 13th Asian Games in Bangkok in December, where Jordan only managed five medals, four by the taekwondo team. The rest of the athletes failed to even match their own national records.

The 8th Pan-Arab Games in Beirut witnessed the best Jordanian showing since the Pan-Arab Games were launched. Competing in 14 of the 20 events, Jordan finished 5th overall among 19 competing countries, taking a total of 40 medals, including 10 gold, 8 silver and 22 bronze medals.

Jordan's athletes gained more gold medals in Beirut than in all the past 7 Pan-Arab Games together in which they gained a total of 49 medals, including 7 gold, 16 silver, 26 bronze.

The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics. HRH Prince Firas Ben Ra'd was named as director of the Paralympics which will be held Sept. 9-20.

One of the major obstacles fac-

ing the Games was solved last week when UAE TV announced that it would lend Jordan Television the necessary equipment to cover the event after it was estimated that JTV needed JD6 million to acquire its own equipment.

Based on the promotion and marketing rights agreement with the Saudi firm RAF, Jordan will receive \$1.5 million in addition to 70 per cent of any additional income.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in construction of sports facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The Jordanian government has earmarked JD18 million and additional sponsorship for Jordan's bid was secured by exempting Jordan from the 50 per cent Arab Sports Federation margin of profit on promotion and television coverage.

Around JD3 million was expected in revenue and the Council of Arab Sports Ministers, which has so far granted \$500,000 in sponsorship, has promised to get additional funding from the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council.

After Beirut hosted the 1997 Games the decision to move the Games back to 1999 instead of 2001 made Jordan's task more difficult and it has had to bear a heavy financial burden because the Kingdom has had to prepare the Games in less than 20 months.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

## Russell hits winner for Utah in possible final preview

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — In a possible preview of the NBA finals, Utah's Bryon Russell rehearsed his dream ending to that championship series on Tuesday.

Russell drained a 3-pointer with 4.7 seconds left to lift the Utah Jazz an 84-81 victory over the Miami Heat, who own a share of the best record in the east.

"I want to hit the winning shot in the championship game," said Russell, who was victimised by Michael Jordan on last year's championship shot.

"That is what has always been my dream. To hit a game-winning shot like tonight doesn't mean a thing," Russell said. "Give me that shot in game seven, that's my dream."

After Miami committed a shot-clock violation, Jazz guard John Stockton used up some of the remaining time before driving to the foul line and handing off to Russell on the right wing.

Russell buried the long jumper for his fourth 3-pointer of the night as Utah remained one game behind surprising Portland for first overall in the West.

Tim Hardaway, whose 3-pointer gave Miami its last lead at 81-79 with 59 seconds left, missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Hardaway led all scorers with 30 points, while Heat centre Alonzo Mourning added 11 and 13 rebounds.

Karl Malone had a miserable 6-of-21 shooting night but still scored 23 points and pulled

down 15 rebounds. Russell finished with 17 points and Stockton chipped in 12 points and eight assists for the Jazz.

In Portland, Isaiah Rider scored 15 points and Arvydas Sabonis added 14 points and 11 rebounds as the trail blazers improved to a league-best to 21-5 with a 79-72 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Brian Grant chipped in 13 points and 12 boards for the Blazers, who held the Warriors scoreless for the final three minutes and sealed their fifth straight win by making 5-of-6 free throws in the final 79 seconds.

Donyell Marshall hit a hook shot to bring the Warriors within 74-72 with 3:20 to play but Golden State did not score again.

In San Antonio, twin towers Tim Duncan and David Robinson led the Spurs to a 112-82 rout of the Denver Nuggets.

Duncan had 19 points five steals and three blocks, while Robinson contributed 17 points, nine rebounds and four blocks.

Robinson scored seven of 17 in the third quarter, including a three-point play that capped a 12-4 spurt and put San Antonio up by 20. The Spurs led by at least 16 the rest of the way.

Nick van Exel scored 18 points to lead the Nuggets, but Antonio McDyess, who had averaged 26 points in two previous games against the Spurs, was held to 10.

In Cleveland, Wesley Person scored 19 points and Shawn Kemp added

17 to lead six players in double figures as the Cavaliers pounded the Boston Celtics 113-86.

The Cleveland reserves broke open the game late in the second quarter with big a 23-9 run that gave the Cavs a 54-38 edge at halftime.

Cleveland got 23 of its 32 second-quarter points from its bench.

Antoine Walker scored 22 points to lead the reeling Celtics, losers of nine of their last 10 games.

In Orlando, Darrell Armstrong scored eight of his career-high 28

points in the final quarter, including a decisive three-point play with 22 seconds left, to lead the Magic to an 86-78 victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Eddie Jones scored 18 of his 20 points in the second half to lead Charlotte, which saw its three-game win streak halted.

In Chicago, rookie Vince Carter scored 14 of his 23 points in a dominating first quarter as the Raptors got off to a fast start en route to a 113-90 victory over the Bulls.

## Wanted

Proof - reading and secretarial assistance to a writer translating major academic work in *Palestinian* studies from German to English.

Applicant should be a computer literate native English speaker

Please contact :

P.O.Box 941505 Amman 11194 Jordan Or Fax 5694446

## Communications Company

In need of self-motivated, team-player Engineer for the following position:  
Engineer with a University Degree in Telecommunications, Computer Science, Electrical or Electronic Engineering:

Fluent in English.

Proactive.

Problem solver.

Customer service oriented.

Good communication skills.

Good remuneration package with possibilities for advancement. Ages required up to 30 years. Fresh graduates are welcome to apply.

CV, recent photo and minimum wage required to be sent to:

General Manager,  
P.O. Box 6386,  
Amman-11118, Jordan.

**C-TOWN** ON THE OCCASION OF THE EID AL-MUBARAK

TODAY & TOMORROW  
THURSDAY 25/3/99  
FRIDAY 26/3/99

**20% DISCOUNT**  
On Everything You Purchase  
From The Second Floor

C-TOWN AMMAN 7th CIRCLE TEL: 581-4129

**Titanic**

**Irish Pub & Rest.**  
Announces the celebration of **St. Patrick's Night** Tonight. Come aboard & enjoy our **Irish music & drink**. Lots of prizes to be won. No entry fee.

7th floor - Garden Palace Hotel  
Garden St. opposite Jabri  
Tel. 5515550 - 079 534043

**cTc**

Fourth Amman Ballet Festival  
**Sheherazade Ballet**  
at the  
**New English School Theatre**  
A Tribute to Dance in the Hashemite Kingdom  
Starring  
The World Famous  
**Christina Huges**  
&  
**Ian Mackenzie Stewart**  
Plus a Jordanian Cast

Early Bird Tickets 3JD 5JD on the door NES Theatre and PAD

Friday 26th March 7:30 p.m.

**Save water ... every drop count!**



## Palestinians running 'parallel government' in east Jerusalem — report

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP)** — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has stepped up its activities in Jerusalem and is running a virtual parallel government in the Arab sector of the city, according to a confidential report by the Israeli secret service quoted on Wednesday by the Haaretz newspaper.

In violation of peace accords which bar it from operating in the Israeli-controlled city, the PNA is running schools, clinics, police services and even an insurance plan for Arab residents, it said.

The report contradicted claims by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that his right-wing government has quashed PNA activity in occupied Arab east Jerusalem, where the Palestinians hope to establish the capital of a future state.

Netanyahu alleges that the previous Labour government in Israel allowed the PNA to operate freely in Jerusalem and has made the accusation a central theme in his campaign for reelection in May polls.

The Haaretz leak of the report came as Netanyahu convened an extraordinary meeting of his cabinet on the Jerusalem issue at city hall — a first for an Israeli government.

"This meeting is a sign of the commitment of this particular government to strengthening Jewish sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem," Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert said at the start of the session, which most observers viewed as part of Netanyahu's election campaign.

The secret service report, which Haaretz said had been submitted to Netanyahu, charged that the long-time PLO headquarters in Arab east Jerusalem, Orient House, had become the "Palestinian Authority executive" in the city.

Orient House notably has developed a health insurance plan for 15,000 residents out of the estimated Arab population in east Jerusalem of 200,000, it said.

The office also finances an Islamic education system for the children of poor families as part of a broader plan to draw some 60,000 Palestinians who have moved from east Jerusalem into nearby West Bank suburbs back into the city, the report said.

The overall aim of the PNA is both to pave the way for making Arab east Jerusalem the capital of a future Palestinian state and to fill the vacuum in social services and infrastructure left after more than 30 years of Israeli occupation.

Other institutions presented in the Israeli report as run by the PNA include Islamic religious institutions, Al Quds University, a tourism bureau and a prisoner support organization.

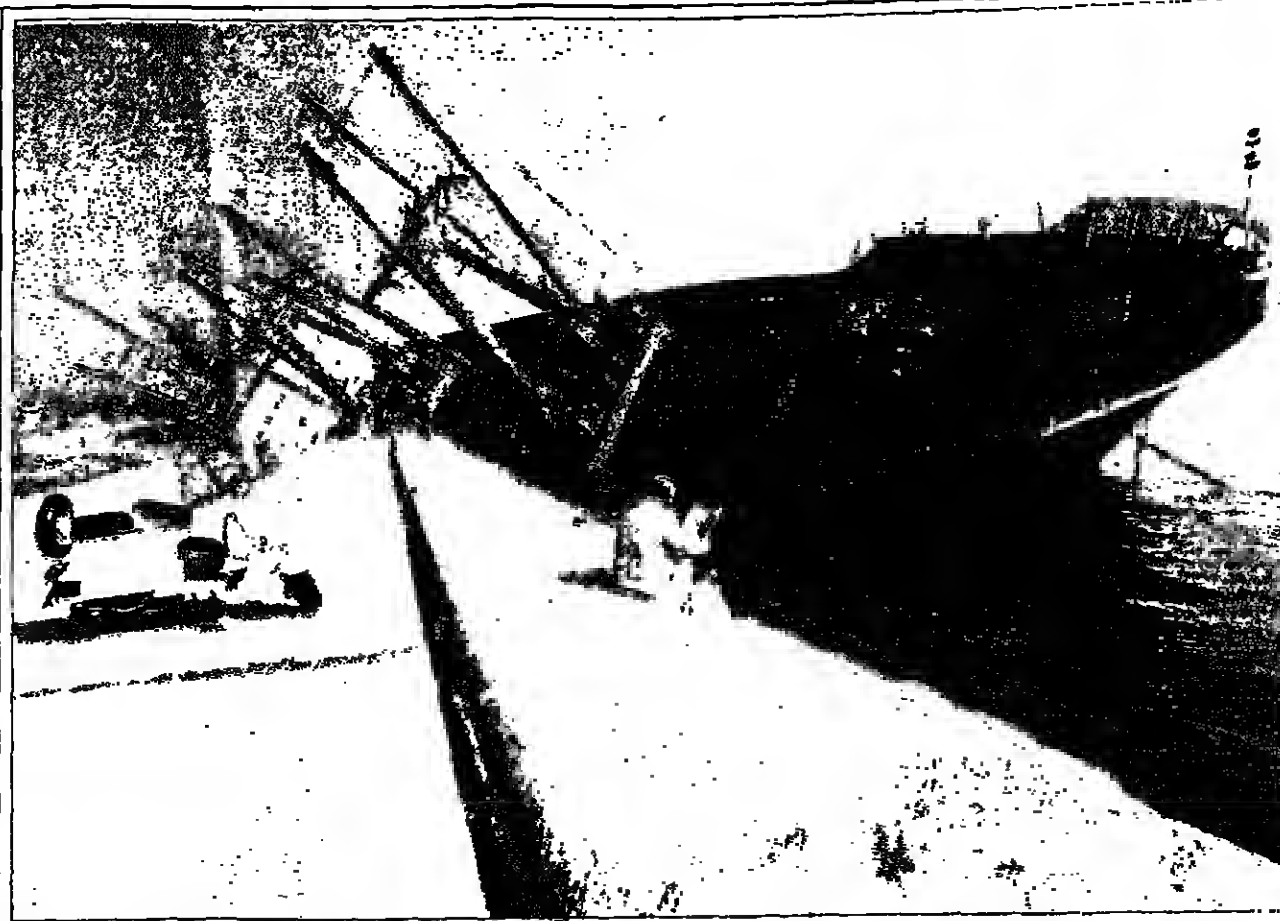
Israel occupied Arab east Jerusalem in 1967 and illegally annexed it as part of its "eternal capital" in 1981.

Under the Oslo interim autonomy accords signed with the PLO in 1993, Israel agreed to negotiate the future status of the city with the Palestinians. Pending those negotiations, the PNA was not to operate in the city.

Netanyahu has ruled out any concessions over Jerusalem, as have his main rivals in the May elections, including Labour Party leader Ehud Barak.

The Jerusalem issue returned to the headlines early this month after the European Union (EU) rejected an Israeli protest over meetings between EU diplomats and Palestinian officials at Orient House.

In an official note to Israel, the EU reaffirmed its longstanding refusal to recognise Israeli sovereignty over any of Jerusalem pending a negotiated agreement over the city's status with the Palestinians. The EU message sparked a furious response from Netanyahu's government.



A LEISURELY DAY: A man sits Wednesday on the boardwalk in Kumkapi, Istanbul, on the Sea of Marmara, with a backdrop of a capsized cargo ship, reading the paper and taking advantage of a glorious spring day (AFP photo)

## Jewish settlers continue West Bank building to prevent Palestinian state

**BAT AYIN (AP)** — Jewish settlers scrambled to build homes on another West Bank hilltop, trying to prevent the land from becoming part of a future Palestinian state.

A dozen mobile homes, a tent, and two partially-constructed houses crowded this hilltop separated from the larger Bat Ayin settlement by a half mile of steep, winding dirt road. A jackhammer cleared rocks, workers installed pipes, and a young couple painted the floor of their wooden house.

Eliezer Halfon, laying a water line Tuesday to the new settlement, said the area was "state land." Gesturing toward the valley separating the settlement from neighboring

Palestinian villages, 24 kilometres south of Jerusalem, he said, "the state owns it so that the Arabs don't take it."

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat raised his concerns about accelerated settlement expansion with President Bill Clinton in their meeting Tuesday at the White House.

The Palestinians are concerned about what will happen after May 4, the date the five-year agreement with Israel on Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza strip expires.

Under the autonomy agreement, both Israel and the Palestinians pledged not to take unilateral steps that would preempt the outcome of talks on the final status of

the West Bank, Gaza and Arab east Jerusalem.

Both sides have broken that promise in some ways, but the Palestinians fear that once Israel is no longer bound by the autonomy accords, it will accelerate settlement expansion in hopes of grabbing as much land as possible before final peace talks. Such talks were to have concluded May 4, but have not even begun.

The United States has appealed to Israel to suspend settlement expansion — to no avail.

Peter Lerner, a spokesman for the Israeli military in the West Bank, said the settlement near Bat Ayin was established immediately after Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu signed the U.S.-brokered Wye River interim peace accord. However, it did not have permission to build new homes, he said.

Peace Now, an Israeli watchdog group, said on Monday that 17 such hilltops have been taken over since Netanyahu's foreign minister called on settlers to grab land following the October signing of the Wye River accord.

Settlement leader Eliezer Roni said he planned to eventually move 500 families onto the hilltop. Contrary to Lerner, he said the state approved the project.

"It's Jewish land," Roni said. "It's not going to go to the Palestinians."

### Police get training in how to sit

**SEATTLE (AP)** — The Seattle police department didn't take the matter sitting down after two employees slipped off their rolling desk chairs and fell on the floor. Civilian employees in the department's fingerprint and photo unit were ordered to undergo a training session on how to safely sit in a chair. "Take hold of the arms and get control of the chair before sitting down," a supervisor said in a recent memo. About 26 employees were expected to attend the half-hour session. Department safety officer Patrick Sweeney said the chair-related injuries are no laughing matter. "Some people know how to sit in a chair," while others need some instruction, Sweeney said. He said he also planned to cover other common office hazards, such as open cabinet drawers.

### Motorist ticketed for sex drive

**TEL AVIV (R)** — Drivers beware: unsafe sex is a punishable offence on Israel's highways. Police said on Wednesday they had ticketed a driver for reckless driving while he had sex on the coastal highway with a hitchhiking woman he picked up. "I saw a naked girl sitting on the driver and they were having sex," a prison guard, who was driving along the same road, told Maariv newspaper. The guard, who saw the car zigzagging along at a speed of 40 kph, signalled the couple to pull over beside the road and called traffic police who arrived to find them still naked. Police said the driver told them: "While driving I became attracted to her. She was a pretty girl and I forgot myself."

### Hoddle says faith healer could have prevented red card

**LONDON (R)** — Former England soccer manager Glenn Hoddle said that David Beckham might not have been sent off during the World Cup if faith healer Eileen Drewery had been in France. "That said situation with David might have been averted if we had had someone there who could have cut it out at source," Hoddle said on a Channel Four TV programme called "Hoddle and the Healer." "I knew there was something amiss there and Eileen could have helped him if she had been there," added Hoddle. "She was due to come out later but that's where I made a mistake. I should have had her there."

### Panhandlers may accept credit cards

**SAN FRANCISCO (R)** — Long on generosity but short on cash? Not to worry. San Francisco panhandlers may soon accept credit cards. Under a proposal now before San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, homeless beggars could be equipped with credit card-type machines that could "swipe" donations from Visa, American Express, or bank ATM cards. "It's more than a hand-out solution," Karen Gatter, who dreamed up the notion, told the San Francisco Examiner. Eighty per cent of each contribution made through the credit card "swipe" system would go to community homeless programmes, with the rest going to the beggar who snagged the donation.

### Egypt's 'nouveau' wine ready

**CAIRO (AFP)** — Wine lovers in Egypt will soon be imbibing a new tipple that producers promise is far superior to the local brand commonly known as "Chateau Mignone." Marketed under the "Obelisk" label, the first 250,000 bottles are ready to go on sale from April 1, mainly in hotels and restaurants in Egypt, beverage company Al Gouna said Wednesday. Each bottle of "Pharaoh Red" or "Alexandria White" costs 29 Egyptian pounds (around \$9), a third of price of imported wine of similar quality.

## Shamir quits Likud for extreme right party

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP)** — Former Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir quit the Likud bloc of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday to join the ultra-nationalist Herut Party created by Benny Begin to run in May elections.

"I have joined with Begin's Herut Party and so can no longer be considered a member of Likud," the 84-year-old Shamir told AFP.

Shamir, who was replaced by Netanyahu as Likud leader after losing power to the Labour Party in 1992 elections, has been sharply critical of the prime minister over the past two years.

A fervent advocate of a "greater Israel" comprising the occupied West Bank, Shamir worked behind the scenes to bring Begin's Herut and other far-right hawkish parties together in an alliance for the May 17 parliamentary elections.

Begin, son of Likud founder and former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, broke with Likud in December after Netanyahu signed a new peace accord that involved ceding more West Bank land to Palestinian rule — a deal also sharply criticised by Shamir.

The new far-right alliance groups Begin's Herut with the Mokedet Party, a group which advocated expelling Palestinians from Israel and the occupied territories, and the national-religious movement Tekuma.

The alliance's slate of candidates includes six members of the outgoing 120-member parliament and hopes to gain up to 18 seats in the new legislature with the support of the 160,000 Jewish settlers in the occupied territories.

Shamir served as prime minister in 1983 and 1984 and again from 1986 to 1992.

## Hillary Clinton visits temple of first woman pharaoh

**LUXOR (AFP)** — U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton visited the temple of the first woman to become pharaoh of Egypt amid tight security on Wednesday as speculation swirled about her own plans for public office.

Armed Egyptian police stood guard on the hills overlooking Hatshepsut Temple as Hillary began her tour of the site where Islamic militants slaughtered 58 foreign holidaymakers 16 months earlier.

Fifty-eight tourists, most of them Swiss, and four Egyptians, were gunned down in November 1997 outside the 3,500-year-old temple on Luxor's west bank by six members of the armed Islamist group Gamaa Islamiyah.

Hillary Clinton, dressed in a green shirt, khaki pants and straw hat, spent an hour at the temple accompanied by her daughter Chelsea.

During her visit to Egypt, the wife of U.S. President Bill Clinton has dodged questions about her rumoured race for a Senate seat but says she wants to play a public role in future.

Asked by journalists if Hillary could be the first "woman pharaoh" in the United States, tour guide Rick Williams from Idaho, laughed and said: "Yes, why not... throughout all the scandals, she was the big winner."

Officially Clinton has not announced her candidacy but she is believed to be interested in the seat of retiring New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Egyptian officials, meanwhile, are hoping that Hillary's visit will provide a shot in the arm to a tourist industry damaged by the Luxor massacre.

Islamists have carried out a series of deadly attacks on foreign tourists during the past decade as part of their bid to undermine the government which relies on billions of dollars in annual tourism revenues.

"I'm thrilled she's here," Cynthia Stokovsky, a tourist from San Diego, said of the visit by the U.S. First Lady. "I think it's great that the wife of the president is taking an interest in these antiquities."

## Anti-U.S. sentiment ahead of Iranian rally

**MECCA (AFP)** — Cries of "Death to America" rang out in Islam's holiest city of Mecca as pilgrims held a protest in defiance of a Saudi ban, an Iranian official said Wednesday.

Iran, meanwhile, announced it would hold its own anti-U.S. rally on Friday but not in Mecca itself.

Ahmad Purnejati, deputy head of Iran's pilgrimage mission, told AFP that the first protest

took place on Tuesday in front of the Grand Mosque. The pilgrims' nationality was unknown.

"There is no indication that the pilgrims in question were Iranians," the official stressed, quoting witnesses. The slogans were chanted in Arabic and not Farsi.

They chanted "Death to America," "Death to Israel," and "Muslims unite," he said, adding that Saudi security forces did not

intervene but were deployed at the scene.

In contrast, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said the protest took place as pilgrims circled the Kaaba, the sacred stone inside the Grand Mosque complex.

Saudi security forces entered the mosque following the protest, it said, adding that the pilgrims also called for the "liberation of Palestine."

Iran holds an anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli rally named "Disavowal of Pagans" each year during the Hajj pilgrimage.

It has been a source of tension since 1987 when 400 people were killed in clashes with security forces in Mecca.

IRNA said its rally would be held this year on Friday in the Arafat plain near Mecca, where pilgrims are to gather for the high point of the Hajj.

## Ocalan to be tried on prison island

**ANKARA (AP)** — Citing security concerns, a court ruled Wednesday that Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan must stand trial on a heavily guarded prison island.

The trial would be held on Inarali Island in the Sea of Marmara, where Ocalan had been kept as the sole inmate since his capture Feb. 15 by Turkish commandos in Kenya.

The state security court said it would ask the justice ministry to make necessary preparations for his trial on the island, rejecting his lawyers' bid to have him moved elsewhere.

The ministry argued that Ocalan's life would be in danger if he was transferred.

The court said the trial on the island could start after prosecutors prepare a new indictment based on what they say are his confessions during interrogation. The ruling came in one of several proceedings against Ocalan. The trials are expected to be consolidated at some point, but until then the court adjourned the current trial in Ankara to April 30.

Defence Attorney Ahmet Zeki Okcuoglu, who was representing Ocalan in court for the first time, complained that defence lawyers were having difficulties in reaching the island and that they are not allowed to confer with their client in private.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israeli troops arrest five Hamas men

**BETHLEHEM (AFP)** — Israeli troops detained five members of the militant Islamist movement Hamas on Wednesday in a dawn raid on a village near Bethlehem. Palestinian sources said. The five men included the local imam or prayer leader, Sheikh Khalid Husni Salameh, 36, who is known to be connected to the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), residents of the village of Teqoa said. The village lies in part of the West Bank which is under Israeli security control and is surrounded by several Jewish settlements, one of them also called Teqoa.

### Israel arrests three civilians in Lebanon

**RASHAYA (AFP)** — Three Lebanese Druze civilians were seized in the Israeli-occupied border zone of southern Lebanon on Wednesday amid a wave of arrests of suspects accused of links with Hizbollah, security sources said. Kamal Ghar, Kamal Munzer and Majeed Munzer were taken by Israeli intelligence officers from their village of Jol Al Saqi in the western sector of the occupied zone, they said. Israeli radio said Monday that between eight and 11 militiamen from the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) had been arrested since Friday. More than 40 members of the Druze community have also been interrogated over suspected links to Hizbollah, the main movement battling Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, security sources said.

### Israeli agent jailed for false Syria reports

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R)** — An Israeli court on Wednesday sentenced an ex-Mossad intelligence agent to five years in prison for fabricating reports on Syria and pocketing money intended for a high-ranking Syrian source. Courts spokesman Moshe Goral said the court sentenced 64-year-old Yehuda Gil, a seasoned Mossad agent, to less than the maximum 15-year penalty "to balance his esteemed career and his crime." He said the 17 months he had sat in jail since his arrest in November 1997 would count towards his five-year sentence. Gil was convicted earlier this month after a year-long closed-door trial of passing false information with intent to harm state security and of stealing money from his employer. He was arrested after an internal Mossad inquiry raised suspicions that he had told his superiors about meetings in Europe with a top Syrian army officer that never took place.

### Bomb blast in Istanbul McDonald's

**ISTANBUL (AFP)** — A bomb exploded in the toilet of a McDonald's restaurant in Istanbul on Wednesday, causing minor damage but no casualties, Anatolia news agency reported. The explosion occurred at 1:00 p.m. (1100 GMT) on the second floor of the five-storey building in Beyazit district, in the city's European sector. Bomb disposal experts said the blast was caused by a time-bomb placed in a Coke can. The ceiling and the door of the toilet were damaged in the blast, the report said. Istanbul, Turkey's biggest city with a population of over 10 million, has been the target of a spate of bombing attacks since Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured and brought to Turkey on Feb. 16.

### Cypriot officer charged in beating case

**LARNACA (AFP)** — A Cypriot police officer was charged with dereliction of duty here on Wednesday for the beating up of illegal African immigrants during a disturbance in a Larnaca prison. Haralambos Mavros, the inspector in charge of the October 23, 1998 operation, pleaded not guilty during an appearance in a Larnaca court. Mavros, the deputy commander of the Cypriot riot police unit known as MMAD, could face up to two years in prison if convicted. The hearing was adjourned until June 18.

## Iraq has one of worst rights records — U.N. report

**GENEVA (R)** — A United Nations investigator said President Saddam's administration still had one of the worst human rights records established in any country since the end of World War II.

Max van der Stoep, the U.N. special rapporteur for human rights in Iraq since 1991, said in his latest report published on Wednesday that Iraq's "regime of systematic human rights violations" posed a threat to peace and security in the region.

Van der Stoep, a former Dutch foreign minister, also appeared to chide other nations for not taking human rights abuses in Iraq more seriously.

"Without firm determination on the part of the international community to respond substantially and meaningfully to the extremely serious violations referred to in this report, the tradition of impunity which prevails in Iraq will almost certainly continue," he said.

Van der Stoep's report, submitted to the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission

which began its annual six-week session in Geneva this week, painted a bleak picture of a country where citizens are denied even the most basic freedoms.

"At the beginning of 1992, the special rapporteur concluded that the gravity of the human rights situation in Iraq had few comparisons in the world since the end of the World War II. The special rapporteur regrets that since then he has had no cause to change his view," the report said.

"The prevailing regime in Iraq has effectively eliminated civil rights to life, liberty, physical integrity, and the freedoms of thought, expression, association and assembly; the rights of political participation have been flouted, while all available resources have not been used to ensure the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights," it said.

Iraq has not allowed van der Stoep to visit the country since 1992 and he relies on testimony from witnesses and other sources to compile his reports.

Iraq has regularly denounced van der Stoep's reports as inaccurate and has said they are part of a Western effort to discredit Saddam's government.

In his latest report, van der Stoep drew particular attention to the fate of more than 600 people still missing during or as a result of Iraq's 1990-91 invasion of Kuwait.

He said Iraq's failure to clear up what has happened to the missing — most of them Kuwaitis — was in violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution.

"The government of Iraq should release immediately all those who are being held and it should reveal the names of all those who have died in its custody, in order to relieve the suffering of the relatives of the disappeared," van der Stoep said.

Iraq last month shunned talks in Geneva on the fate of the missing but said it would continue to investigate what had happened to them.